TOMOMI YAMASHITA

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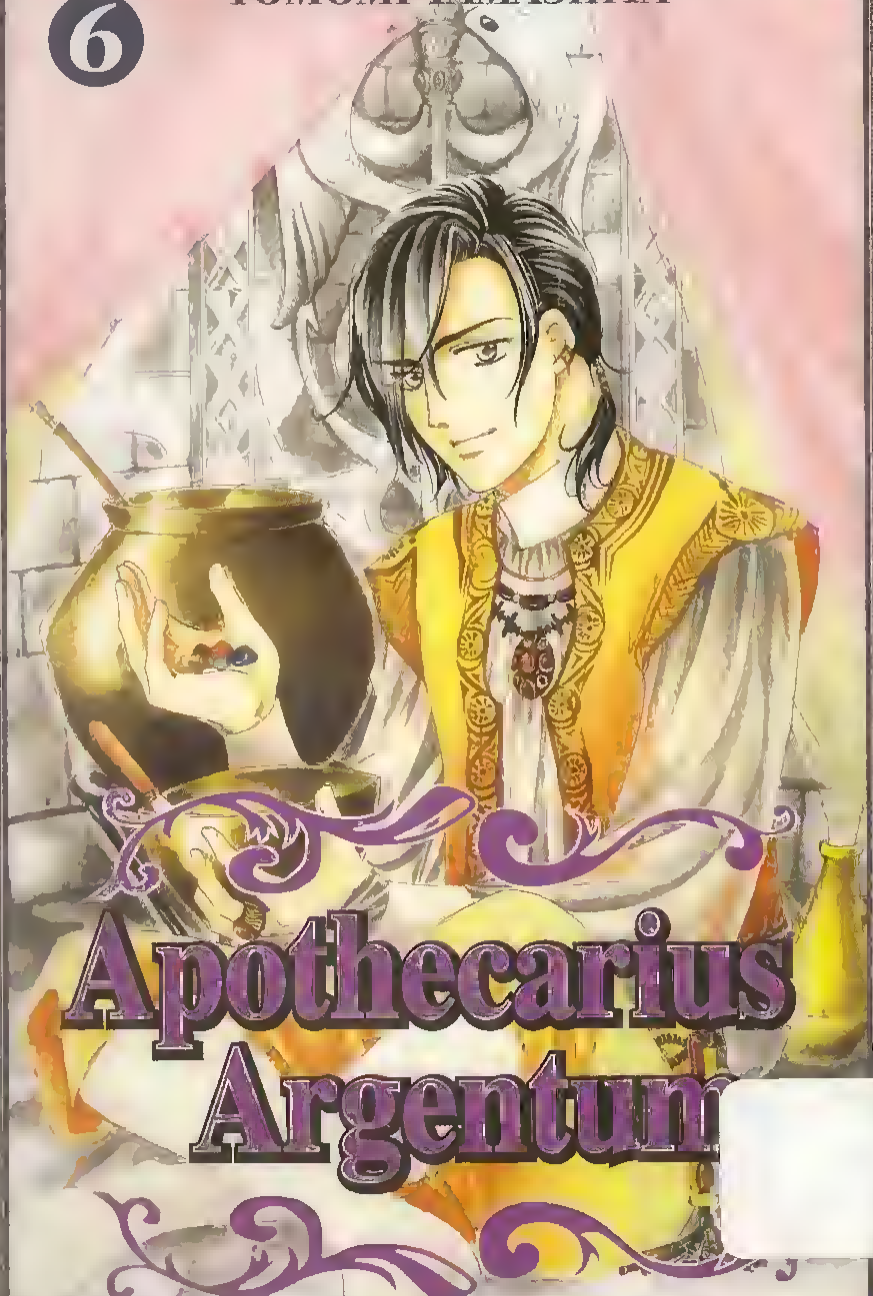
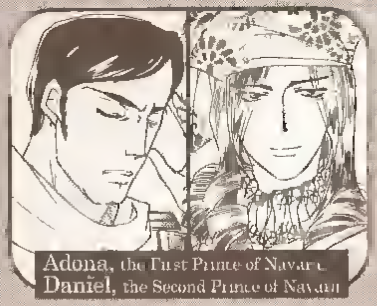


Apothecarius Argentum

Apothecarius Argentum

Volume 6

By Tomomi Yamashita



Adona, the First Prince of Navara
Daniel, the Second Prince of Navara

Lorca
The Prince of Navara, a neighboring kingdom. He wants to marry Lady Primula.

Carbeau
Lady Primula's Martial Arts instructor.

Garna
The royal chef.

King of Beazol
He's known as a ruthless ruler, but he loves his daughter dearly.

Argent was fed poison during his youth to turn him into the ultimate assassin. The King of Beazol bought Argent to be the food taster for his young daughter. However, the Princess freed Argent and instructed him to flee from the palace.

Several years later, Argent reappeared as a skilled healer and saved the Princess from an assassination attempt. As a result, he was promoted to the position of Royal Apothecary. Along with Soda, his apprentice, Argent works tirelessly for the people...

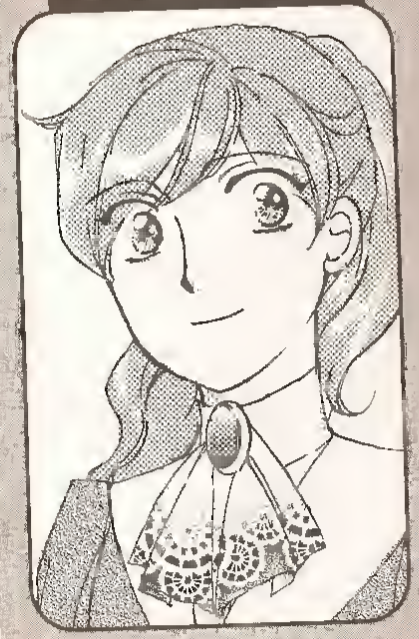
One day, Prince Lorca from Navara crashed a party and proposed to Lady Primula! The King of Navara was assassinated, and Beazol and Navara quickly moved to establish a peace treaty.

Argent discovered that in Castoria, there might be a way to detoxify his body so that he could lead a normal life. He set out to Castoria with Soda, but...

Apothecarius Argentum

Character Introductions
and Summary of Previous Volume

Lady Primula
The daughter of the King of Beazol. A strong-minded woman, she's known as the "Princess of Steel."



Argent
The Royal Apothecary and Lady Primula's former food taster.

Carli
Lady Primula's etiquette instructor.

Soda
Argent's assistant and pupil.

Apothecarius Argentum

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THE FINEST OF CASTORIA!
WE HAVE DIAMONDS, CRYSTALS AND MORE!
WOW
JUST A THOUSAND LIRS. JUST A THOUSAND LIRS!
THEY LOOK FAKE TO ME.
WHY, MASTER?!
THERE ARE MARKETS AROUND THE BORDER. LET'S GO TAKE A LOOK.
Before
ARGENT IS MY MASTER.
WELL, WE MAY FIND THE STONE WE'RE HERE TO LOOK FOR.
EVER SINCE HE CUT HIS HAIR, HE'S BEEN MORE OUTGOING.
HE WAS A BASILISK TRAINED AS AN ASSASSIN FROM A YOUNG AGE.
HE WAS HIRED AS A FOOD TASTER FOR THE PRINCESS OF BEAZOL BECAUSE OF HIS RESISTANCE TO POISON. HE EVENTUALLY BECAME THE ROYAL APOTHECARY.

I'M SODA, AN APOTHECARY... ACTUALLY, I'M JUST AN APPRENTICE.
WHO IS SHE?
SODA'S VISION OF HIMSELF IN THE FUTURE, THE OWNER OF A NATIONWIDE FRANCHISE
MY DREAM IS TO BE AN INDEPENDENT APOTHECARY AND FIND MYSELF AN ADORABLE WIFE.
HE'S DAYDREAMING
THE TRAINING WAS TOUGH
I WAS TRAINING HARD UNDER THE ROYAL APOTHECARY, ARGENT. HOWEVER...
I'M CURRENTLY ON MY WAY TO A COUNTRY FAR AWAY CALLED CASTORIA.
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER

GIVE ME THE MONEY BACK!
NO WAY!
SAY WHAT?
SODA?
DON'T BE FOOLED, MASTER! THAT'S FAKE, CAN'T YOU TELL?
DASH DASH DASH
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE?!
WAIT!
DAMN COPS, GOTTA RUN!
DASH
HEY, YOU LEFT--?!
?
I ADVISE YOU TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE IN CASTORIA.

IF YOU SEND IT TO YOUR GIRL, I'M SURE SHE'LL COVER YOU WITH KISSES!
THE RING IS CUTE. IT'S ENCRUSTED WITH DIAMONDS!
SLAP SLAP
HIS SILVER HAIR, THE RESULT OF HIS TRAINING AS A BASILISK, WAS CUT SHORT AND DYED BLACK AS A DISGUISE.
THIS COUNTRY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF USING BASILISKS, AND ARGENT DISCOVERED ABOUT A MONTH AGO THAT THERE MAY BE A STONE THAT COULD DETOXIFY HIM HERE.
HOWEVER, HIS DESIRE TO RETURN HIS BODY TO NORMAL HAS BROUGHT HIM TO CASTORIA.
THE STONE IS SMALLER BUT IT'S A BETTER SETTING.
NO, THIS IS BETTER.
HOW ABOUT THIS?
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
THANK YOU FOR THE DIAMONDS!
...
DAYDREAM
THAT'S THE REASON I'VE TAGGED ALONG.
THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER, WE'LL ACCEPT FOREIGN MONEY!
I WOULDN'T WANT TO RIP YOU OFF. BESIDES, WE DON'T HAVE CASTORIAN CURRENCY...
GRR GRR
WELL ...
YOU'RE MY TYPE SO I'LL GIVE YOU HALF OFF.
THWAK
OUCH!!!
HOWEVER, HE'S AWKWARD WITH DAY-TO-DAY SITUATIONS.
AS A MASTER, HE'S PRETTY COOL.

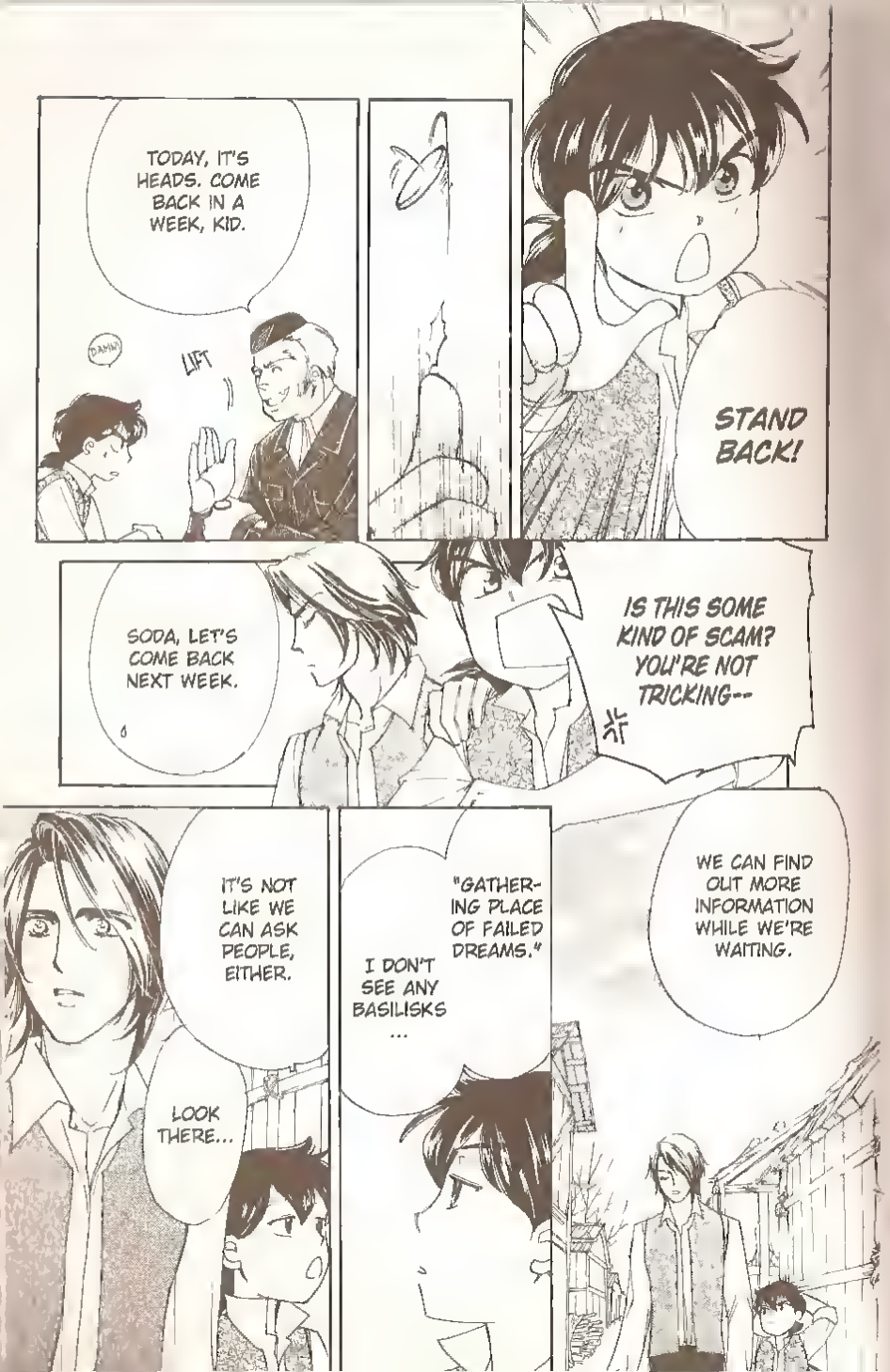
FIRST, STATE YOUR NAME.
ARGENT... SILVER, EH. THAT'S A RATHER GRAND NAME YOU HAVE THERE...
CAPTAIN, THEY'RE NOT CARRYING WEAPONS.
JUST TOO MUCH PERFUME. PHEW.
UH?
I'M ARGENT, THIS IS SODA.
IF MY MASTER WASN'T SO SLOW...
WE'VE QUICKLY BROKEN THE ADVICE GIVEN TO US BY PRINCE DANIEL.
CRAP. I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE DISCOVERED SO FAST!
HEY, YOU HAVE A TATTOO!
I'M GLAD I DYED MY HAIR AND DISGUISED MY TATTOO.
I WAS A REBELLIOUS YOUTH...
TULIP?
EXPLAIN THIS TERRIBLY CHILDISH-LOOKING TATTOO.
EXCUSE ME IF IT'S CHILDISH THAT KIND OF
THEY HAVE NO MONARCHY, AND THE CITIZENS VOTE THEIR LEADER ANNUALLY.
THEY'RE LIKE ONE, GIANT GUILD, ESSENTIALLY.
THEY DON'T LOOK FAVORABLY ON FOREIGNERS AND HAVE STRICT REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY.
CASTORIA'S WEALTH COMES FROM THEIR MINES. IT'S A MERCHANT SOCIETY. IN FACT, THE MAJORITY OF THEIR POPULATION ARE MERCHANTS.
IF THEY DISCOVER YOU'RE A BASILISK, YOU MAY BE EXECUTED. BE CAREFUL.
SO THAT'S THE REASON INFREE AND I COULD ONLY WANDER NEAR THE BORDER.
...
STAND OVER THERE, THE BOTH OF YOU.
RIGHT, MASTER?
WE SHOULD BE FINE DEALING WITH GUILDS. WE LEARNED OUR LESSON BACK IN BEAZOL.

THUD
WE'RE ACTUALLY DEVELOPING NEW FABRIC DYE. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES.
THE COLOR DEEPENS OVER TIME. IT'S BEEN SELLING WELL AMONG THE NOBILITY OF NAVARA.
REALLY?
IT'S CALLED CARMINE. WE STARTED ITS PRODUCTION IN NAVARA.
THAT IS A BLACK DYE MADE FROM GALLNUTS. IT CAN BE USED TO DYE HAIR AND MAKE INK.
IT'S RATHER PLAIN BUT VERY UNUSUAL...
I DID HEAR THAT THE YOUNGEST PRINCE OF NAVARA STARTED A DYE BUSINESS AS A NEW INDUSTRY FOR HIS COUNTRY.
SO THESE ARE THE DYE
SOUNDS GOOD. WE'LL SETTLE WITH A BET.
CAN WE HAVE PERMISSION TO SELL THEM IN CASTORIA?
THESE HAVEN'T REACHED YOUR MARKET, I'M SURE?

APOTH-ECARY...
WE'RE HERE TO SELL MEDICINE!
SO, WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WE'RE TRAVELING APOTH-ECARIES.
AHAHAHAHA
I HOPE YOU'LL HEAR US OUT.
MY MASTER WAS A...
THEY ROLL UP THEIR SNOT AND SELL IT AS A CURE-ALL.
ONLY TALENTLESS FRAUDS AND SNAKE OIL SALESMEN CALL THEM-SELVES APOTHECAR-IES!
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY FOREIGNERS WITH NO CLUE!

AS A RESULT, I'VE GOT MY BUSINESS HERE ON THE BORDER.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO ENTER FOR TWO YEARS.
CASTORIA ONLY ALLOWS PRODUCTS THAT HAVE A LOT OF VALUE.
THAT MEANS YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE.
THEY ASKED FOR A BET?
THEY'RE ALSO CASTORIAN BUSINESS-MEN WHO HAVE FAILED.
RIGHT, THEY'RE ALL BANNED FROM ENTERING THE COUNTRY.
SO ALL THE SHOPS ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER...
WE WELCOME NEW-COMERS.
HERE, PEOPLE HANG ON TO THEIR DREAMS. THIS IS THE GATHERING PLACE OF FAILED DREAMS.
WHAT DO WE DO?
THIS DOESN'T LOOK EASY.
WHOOO SH

TWO PEOPLE, 1 ROOM, 1 NIGHT.
THANKS FOR YOUR BUSINESS!
YOU'VE BEEN TURNED AWAY AT THE GATE, RIGHT?
THEY SAID TO COME BACK TOMORROW. I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WOULD FLIP A COIN TO DETERMINE THESE THINGS!
FLIP
THIS IS A CASTORIAN COIN. PICK HEADS OR TAILS.
HEADS.
TAILS FOR ME, THEN.


TODAY, IT'S HEADS. COME BACK IN A WEEK, KID.
DAMN!
LIFT
STAND BACK!
SODA, LET'S COME BACK NEXT WEEK.
IS THIS SOME KIND OF SCAM? YOU'RE NOT TRICKING--
IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN ASK PEOPLE, EITHER.
LOOK THERE...
I DON'T SEE ANY BASILISKS ...
"GATHERING PLACE OF FAILED DREAMS."
WE CAN FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION WHILE WE'RE WAITING.

A DREAM...
I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GET RICH QUICK, BUT MY DREAM IS A FORM OF GAMBLING...
THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE OF FAILURE.
RIGHT.
LET'S SLEEP. WE NEED REST FOR TOMORROW.
WE'RE HERE. WE HAVE TO KEEP TRYING.
CAN I GIVE UP...
WHAT IF WE COULD ENTER BUT COULDN'T FIND THE STONE?
WHAT IF WE WERE DENIED ENTRY?
THE PRINCESS?
MY FUTURE?
TODAY, I'M GOING TO CHOOSE.

SHE'S UNKEMPT AND HAS A HORRIBLE PERSONALITY.
HURRY!
YET FOR SOME REASON A MINING COMPANY IS BUYING THEM UP.
THERE'S NOTHING IN THE MOUNTAINS AROUND HERE EXCEPT WORTHLESS ROCKS.
WAIT, OH...
YOU NEVER LISTEN TO ME!
HEY YOU!
IT'S BEST NOT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THAT TYPE.
HERE YOU GO.
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THIS?
IT'S GONE NOW!
YOU'RE PERSISTENT! I DON'T HAVE YOUR MONEY!
YOU'RE THE GUY FROM YESTER-DAY!
UGH
WAIT!

HE'S JUST AN OLD MAN. HIS HAIR'S SILVER FROM OLD AGE.
I'LL SEARCH FOR THAT. YOU GO BACK TO THE MOUNTAINS!
MS. POPOLA, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'M SORRY!
IS THIS ALL YOU GOT?
SO, WHAT ABOUT WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR?
SHE'S ONE OF US.
THAT'S THE GIRL FROM YESTERDAY...
I THINK SHE'S TRYING TO BRING BACK HER FAMILY'S PAST GLORY, BUT SHE'S LOOKING TO GET RICH QUICK BY HAVING HIM LOOK FOR NEW MINES IN THE MOUNTAINS.
AN ACCIDENT LEVELED THEIR MINE AND HOME, TAKING HER FAMILY WITH IT. SHE WAS LEFT, ALONG WITH ONE OF THE SERVANTS YOU SEE.
AT ONE POINT, SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A PROMINENT MINE OWNER IN CASTORIA.

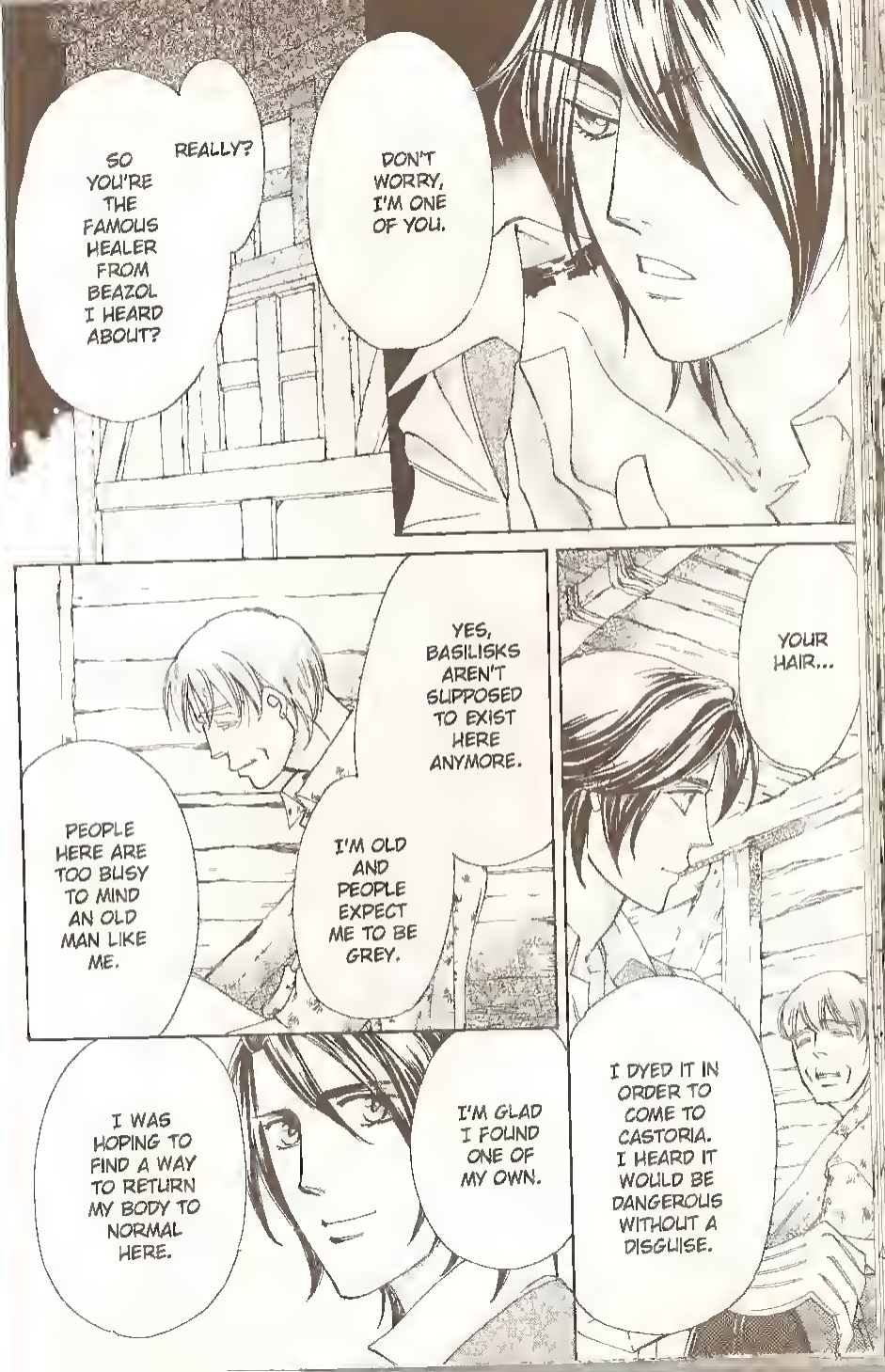
WHAT THE HELL!
WHAT THE HELL!
WHAT THE HELL!
ARE YOU OKAY?
?
?
DAZED
MASTER, PLEASE SIT DOWN.
JAB
I'M WORRIED, THOUGH.
WOR-RIED?!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND CASTORIAN WOMEN!
I ALWAYS WANTED TO TELL YOU BEFORE, BUT I'M GOING TO COME OUT WITH IT NOW.
?
VERY POLITE
YOU HAVE TERRIBLE TASTE IN WOMEN!

THE DIAMONDS ARE ALL HERE. NOT A SCRATCH.
I'M SO RELIEVED!
YOU HAD IT?
SHOULDN'T YOU SAY THANK YOU FIRST?
SMACK
FOR ME, THEY'RE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PEOPLE!
DON'T TALK ABOUT DIAMONDS LIKE THAT!
THEY'RE JUST SPARKLY STONES!
YOU'RE RELIEVED? SO DIAMONDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEOPLE?

SOMETHING'S WRONG.
THAT'S THE GUY WHO THE GIRL...
SLUMP!
I MEAN IT. IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
BUT...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES. DON'T MIND ME.
YOU'RE SOMEWHAT RIGHT ABOUT HIM REPRESENTING MY FUTURE.
MASTER, HE'S...

WHY DOES THE CONVERSATION ALWAYS TURN TO THIS SUBJECT?
AND WHY NOW?
OKAY, LADY PRIMULA IS TEN TIMES BETTER THAN THAT.
WHY DO YOU GET INVOLVED WITH WOMEN WHO ARE FUSSY AND HARD TO HANDLE?
I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY. I MEAN, YOU CAN ASK, BUT...
I BET YOU GET A KICK OUT IT.
I THINK YOU'RE A MASOCHIST.
?
BUT I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS. YOU'RE STILL A KID.
YOU LOVE TO SAY THAT ABOUT ME...
WOULD YOU LIKE DINNER? BATH? ME?
I'M GOING TO FIND A GENTLE, NICE WOMAN AND BE A PROUD HUSBAND!
WHEN I GROW UP, I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE YOUR KIND OF MISTAKES.
HE'S GOING TO BE YOUR FUTURE!
I CAN SEE IT CLEAR AS DAY!

I'M SORRY.
I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF SUCH A THING.
DO YOU KNOW ANY-THING?
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG. I CAN'T REMEMBER.
THEN WHY WERE BASILISKS HUNTED DOWN?
I SUGGEST YOU RETURN HOME IF YOU HAVE ONE.
I SAY THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
JADE! YOU WEREN'T BACK SO I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU AND PEOPLE SAID YOU WERE CARRIED IN HERE!
SLAM
BUT--!


REALLY?
SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS HEALER FROM BEAZOL I HEARD ABOUT?
DON'T WORRY, I'M ONE OF YOU.
YES, BASILISKS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO EXIST HERE ANYMORE.
PEOPLE HERE ARE TOO BUSY TO MIND AN OLD MAN LIKE ME.
I'M OLD AND PEOPLE EXPECT ME TO BE GREY.
YOUR HAIR...
I WAS HOPING TO FIND A WAY TO RETURN MY BODY TO NORMAL HERE.
I'M GLAD I FOUND ONE OF MY OWN.
I DYED IT IN ORDER TO COME TO CASTORIA. I HEARD IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS WITHOUT A DISGUISE.

MASTER!
SHE GAVE ME HALF OFF FOR THE DIAMOND.
MOST OF THE GOODS WERE CRYSTALS BUT HERS WERE THE REAL DEAL.
WE USE MINERALS AS MEDICINE AT TIMES.
I'M NOT AS SKILLED AS YOU, BUT I DO HAVE AN EYE FOR STONES AS A RESULT.
I WILL ADVISE YOU AS A GENUINE APOTH-ECARY.
HE'S IN NO CONDITION TO BE MINING IN THE MOUNTAINS.
NOT EVEN FOR ONE MORE DAY? TOMORROW, THOSE MINES WILL BE SOLD TO SOMEONE ELSE!
HIS LUNGS ARE IN TERRIBLE CONDITION.
HE MAY BE A BASILISK, BUT IF HE MINES TOMOR-ROW, HE MAY DIE.
I UNDER-STAND.
WELL, PLEASE LOOK AFTER HIM.

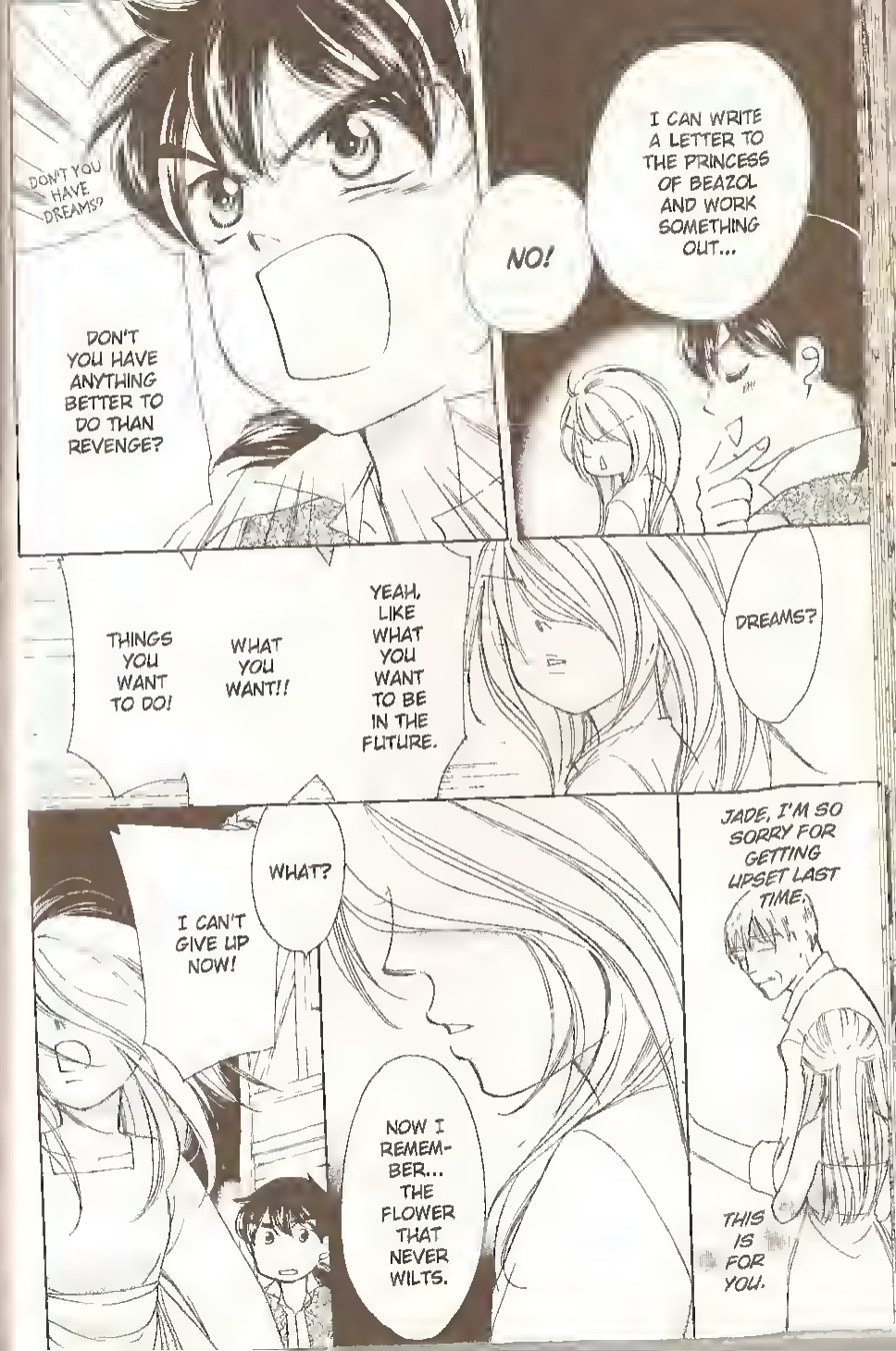
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
JADE, WHAT ABOUT FINDING THE STONES?
I'M SORRY, MS. POPOLA.
NOTHING TODAY EITHER...
HE COLLAPSED ON HIS WAY BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN, SO WE TREATED HIM HERE.
TREAT-ED HIM?
WE'RE APOTH-ECARIES.
AND WE'RE NO FAKES.
WE'RE LEGITIMATE HEALERS AND APOTHECARIES, DAMMIT!
I CAN TELL, DUMMY!
I CAN TELL WHEN PEOPLE ARE LEGIT.
HOW MUCH DO I OWE YOU FOR YOUR FEES?
DON'T WANT ANY.

"YOU ALSO CANNOT COME NEAR ME."
I WAS A BASILISK HIRED BY HER PARENTS IN ONE OF THEIR DIAMOND MINES.
MY MASTER WAS A VERY KIND MAN AND TREATED ALL THE BASILISKS LIKE FAMILY.
HE PROTECTED US WHEN WE WERE BEING HUNTED DOWN. WE ALL WORKED HARD UNDER HIM TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE.
UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR MINES CAVED IN DURING AN ACCIDENT. MS. POPOLA AND I WERE THE ONLY SURVIVORS.
SHE LOST EVERYTHING WHEN SHE WAS FORCED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.
THAT WAS WHEN SHE DISCOVERED THAT A COMPETITOR CAUSED THE ACCIDENT.

AFTER ALL, I AM A POISONOUS BASILISK.
MISS POPOLA IS ACTUALLY DOING HER PART TO LOOK AFTER ME.
"LOOK AFTER HIM"? SHE'S NOT GOING TO CARE FOR YOU?
NOBODY WILL LOOK AFTER ME. NOT A WARM TOUCH OR EVEN GET WELL FLOWERS.
SHE STARTED TO CRY, AND I WANTED TO CONSOLE HER...
LONG TIME AGO, WHEN I GOT HURT IN THE MOUNTAINS AFTER SLIPPING ON A TRAIL...
SHE GAVE ME GET-WELL FLOWERS. OF COURSE, THEY WILTED IN MY HANDS.
"MY BLOOD AND SKIN HAVE BEEN INFUSED WITH POTENT POISONS. I KILL EVERY LIVING THING I TOUCH..."
"PRINCESS, THIS IS THE GRIM REAPER'S CURSE!"
"ARGENT, I PICKED THEM FOR YOU."
"THEY'RE THE FIRST PRIMROSES TO BLOOM THIS SPRING!"

"JEWELS START OFF IN THE GROUND AND WITHSTAND YEARS OF LONELINESS AND PRESSURE."
"THEY DON'T SPARKLE UNTIL THEY'RE MINED AND POLISHED."
YOUR DIAMONDS ARE FAKES.
"JUST LIKE THIS DIAMOND, YOU NEED TO POLISH YOUR DETERMINATION, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES."
IGNORE
GEE, THANKS FOR IGNORING ME.
YOU'RE TOUGH AS NAILS. YOU CAN SURVIVE ANYWHERE.
WHY DON'T YOU GO ELSEWHERE AND START OVER?
PRECIOUS GEMS ARE STONES AT FIRST.
WHEN MY FATHER GAVE ME MY BROOCH, HE SAID...
REGARDLESS I HOPE TO CARE FOR HER UNTIL MY DYING DAY.
SHE WANTS TO GET BACK INSIDE CASTORIA NOT FOR DIAMONDS OR MONEY...
GET BACK IN FOR REVENGE?
EVEN OBSESSING OVER DIAMONDS IS MUCH HEALTHIER! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D HELP HER!
I AM HAPPY, DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES. SHE'S LIKE A GRANDDAUGHTER TO ME.
AND BASILISKS CAN'T HAVE FAMILIES.
POPOLA'S YOUR NAME? SORRY ABOUT BEING RUDE.

SODA, I TALKED TO JADE.
I'LL GO TO THE MINES SINCE TONIGHT IS THE LAST NIGHT...
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I HAVE ONE MORE NIGHT BEFORE THE MINE'S SOLD! I'M GOING INTO THE MINES!
HUH?
THEY'RE GONE
THE KIDS HEADED TOWARDS THE MINES JUST NOW.
THERE'S NOTHING OF VALUE LEFT IN THEM, BUT THE MINES ARE STILL FILLED WITH TOXIC FUMES.
THIS WON'T WILT IN YOUR HANDS.
I'M GOING TO USE LOTS OF COLORFUL GEMS AND MAKE YOU MORE FLOWER BROOCHES.
JADE, I'M GOING TO LEARN TO MAKE JEWELRY WHEN I GROW UP.

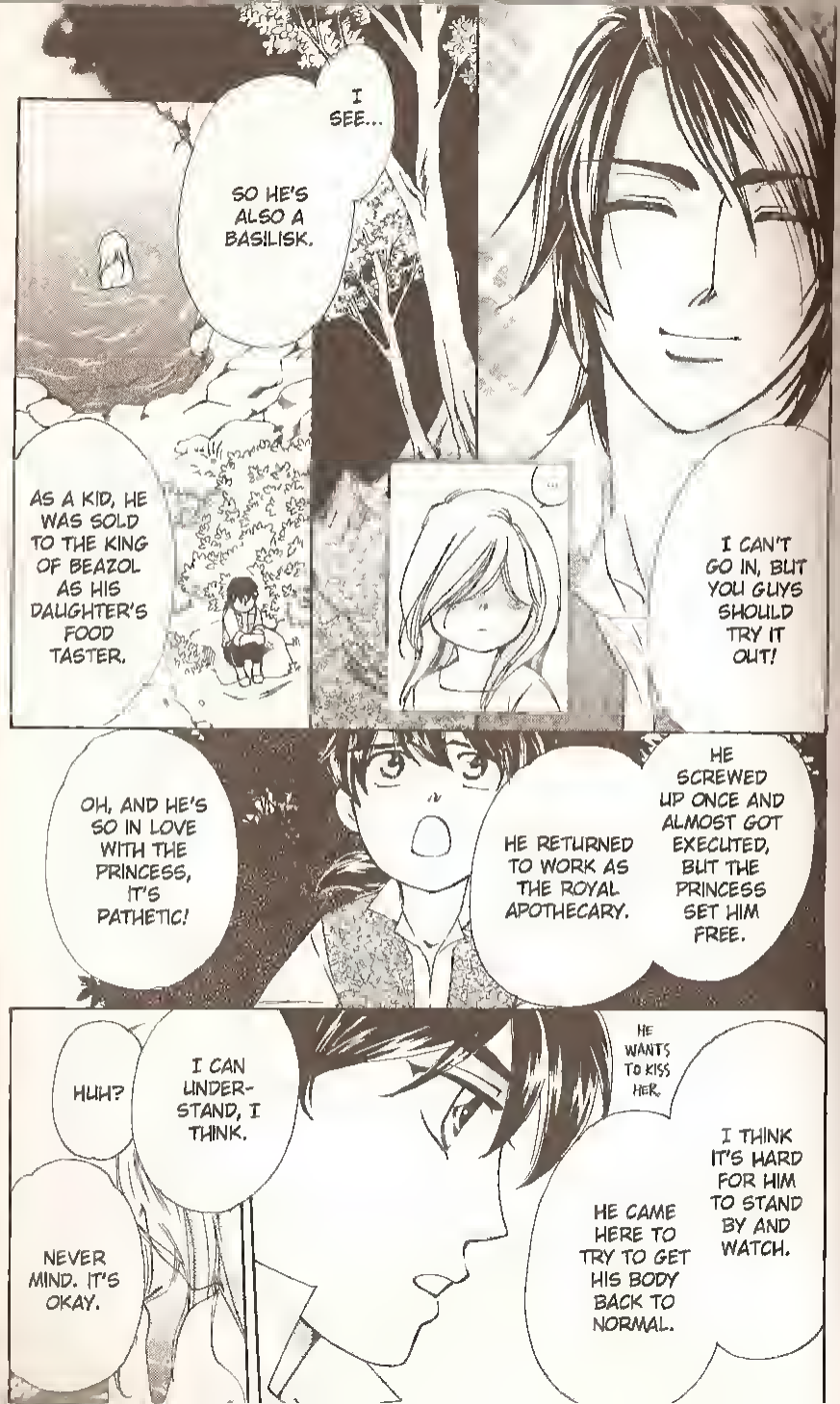

DON'T YOU HAVE DREAMS?
NO!
I CAN WRITE A LETTER TO THE PRINCESS OF BEAZOL AND WORK SOMETHING OUT...
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAN REVENGE?
DREAMS?
YEAH, LIKE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE.
WHAT YOU WANT!!
THINGS YOU WANT TO DO!
WHAT?
I CAN'T GIVE UP NOW!
NOW I REMEMBER... THE FLOWER THAT NEVER WILTS.
JADE, I'M SO SORRY FOR GETTING UPSET LAST TIME.
THIS IS FOR YOU.

HEY, POPOLA!
I CAN'T LET YOU JUST...
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANTED TO COME WITH YOU!
HERE WE GO.
I HAVE AN ANTIDOTE SOME-WHERE...
COME ON, WAKE UP!
WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
SODA'S IMAGINARY FIRST KISS
I MAY HAVE TO DO THIS VIA MOUTH TO MOUTH!
DAMN, I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO WASTE MY FIRST KISS ON A GIRL LIKE HER, BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE.
TEARS OF A MAN
I MAY HAVE TO...
DRINK!
SHAKE
DROOL

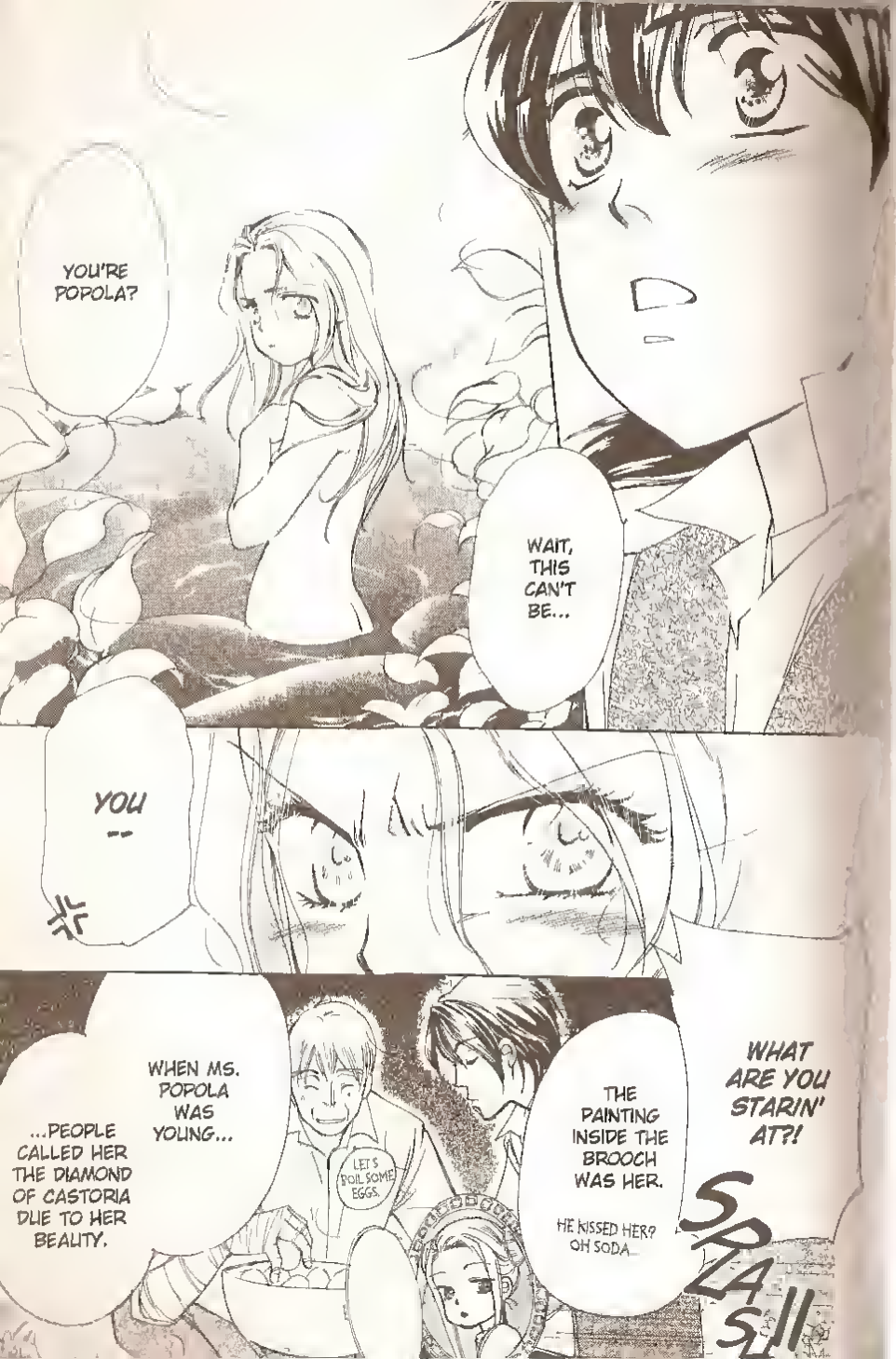
THEN SHUT YOUR MOUTH.
IT'S PROBABLY HYDROGEN SULFIDE. WE'LL DIE IF WE STAY OUT HERE TOO LONG!
THE FUMES HERE ARE BAD!
THEY COULD GET HURT UP THERE!!
WHOOSH
JADE...
AND THE BASILISKS WERE WORKING IN THESE CONDITIONS FOR YEARS...?
IF WE COME ACROSS ONE OF THESE, WE'RE TOAST.
LOOK AT THE ANIMAL PRINTS. IT'S PROBABLY A BEAR.
GO BACK WITHOUT ME! I NEVER ASKED YOU TO COME!
COME ON, THIS ISN'T RIGHT!
LET'S GO BACK, PLEASE?

SODA.
SODA?
MASTER?
GLAD YOU'RE AWAKE.
I'M FINE. HOW ABOUT THE BEAR? POPOLA?
SHE'S FINE. IF WE WERE ANY LATER, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DANGER.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE OKAY, MS. POPOLA!
YOU'RE FREE NOW. GO WHERE YOU WANT.
I'M SORRY I CAN'T MAKE YOU FLOWERS THAT WON'T WILT.
I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ON CASTORIA AND REVENGE.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR. YOU ALREADY HAVE.

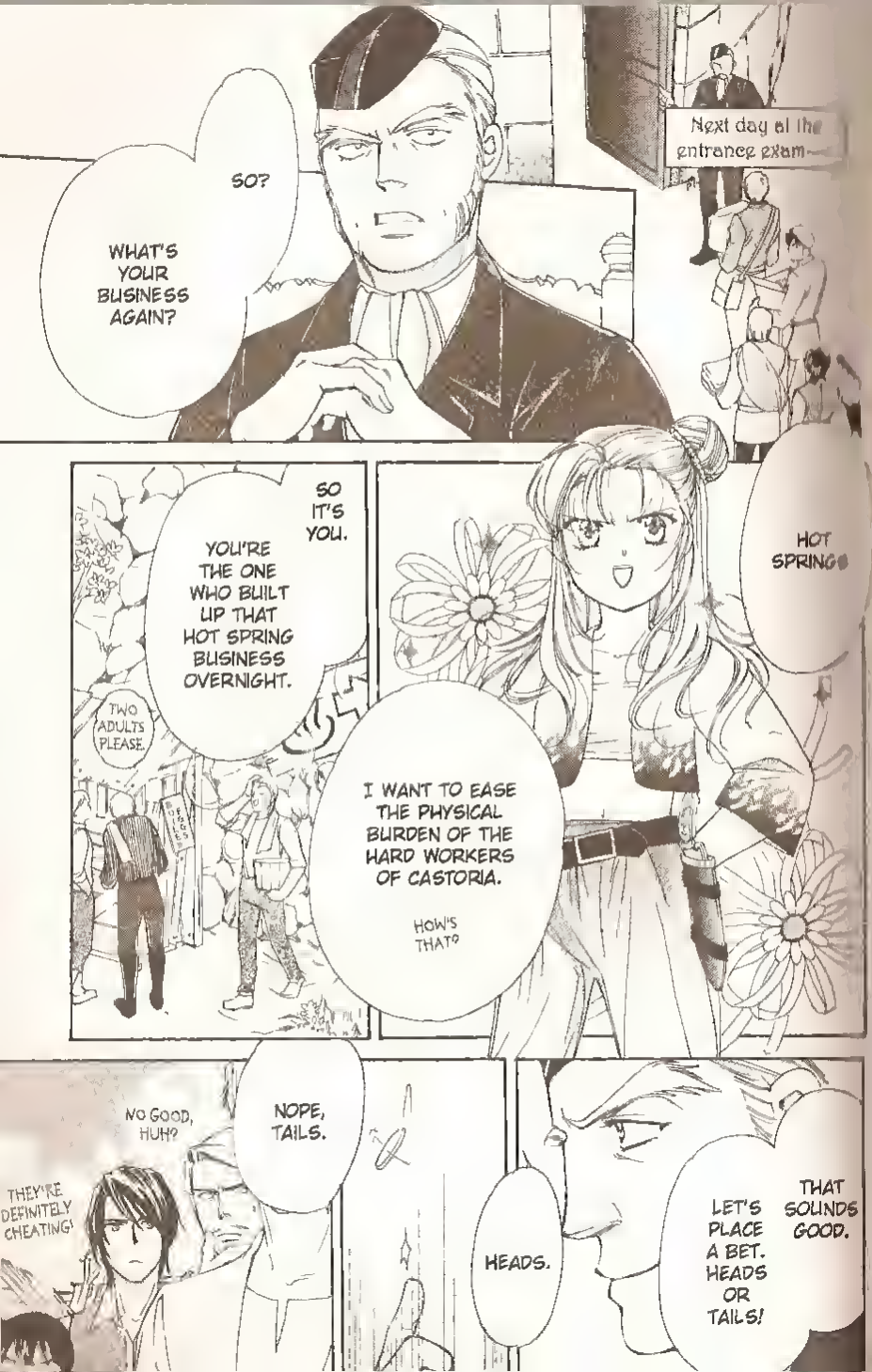
I HAVE NO CHOICE! I MUST SAVE A LIFE!
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GOOD, PEOPLE ARE HERE...
HELP! IT'S ME, SODA!
PHEW!

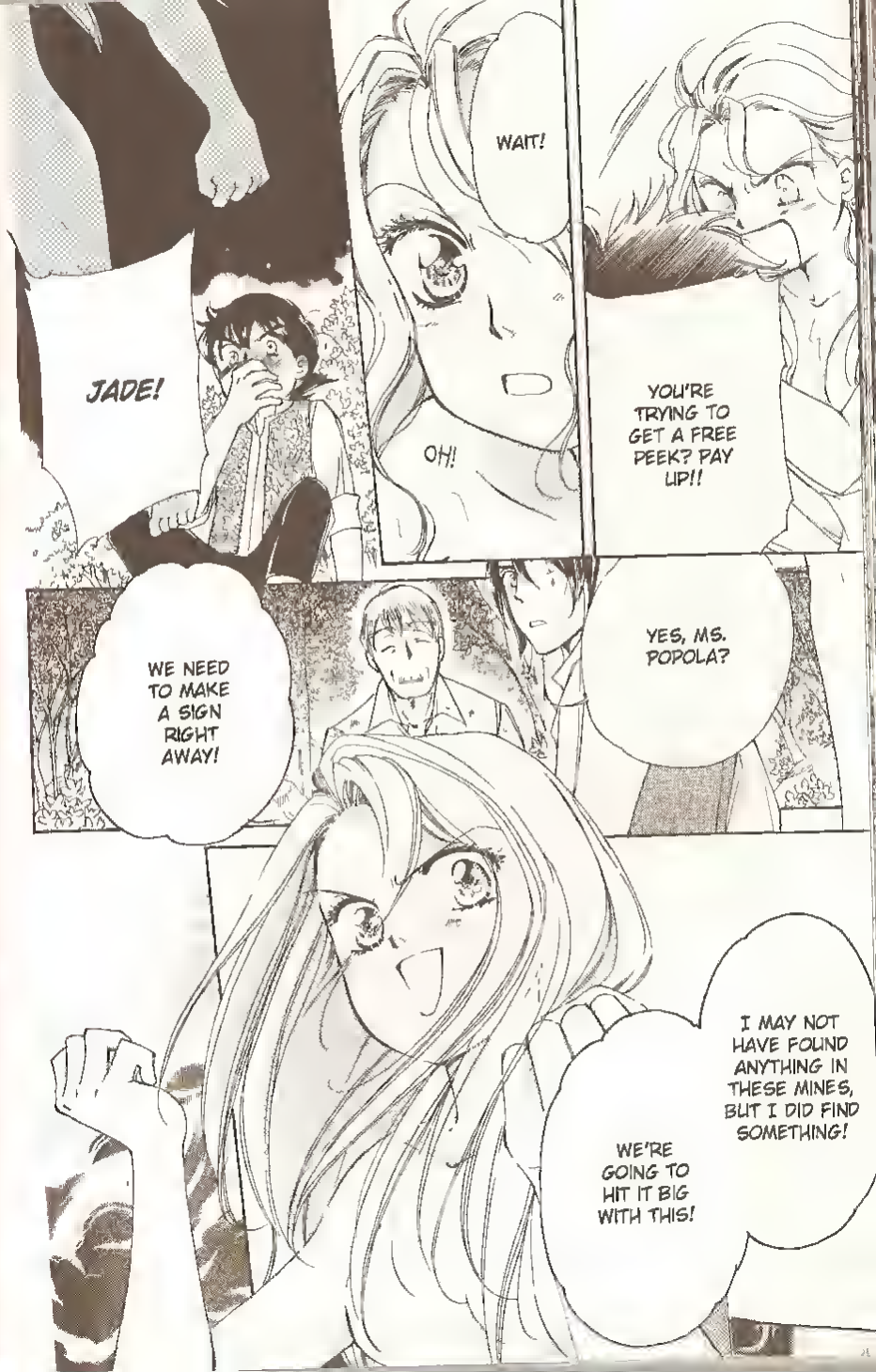

I SEE...
SO HE'S ALSO A BASILISK.
AS A KID, HE WAS SOLD TO THE KING OF BEAZOL AS HIS DAUGHTER'S FOOD TASTER.
I CAN'T GO IN, BUT YOU GUYS SHOULD TRY IT OUT!
OH, AND HE'S SO IN LOVE WITH THE PRINCESS, IT'S PATHETIC!
HE RETURNED TO WORK AS THE ROYAL APOTHECARY.
HE SCREWED UP ONCE AND ALMOST GOT EXECUTED, BUT THE PRINCESS SET HIM FREE.
HUH?
I CAN UNDER-STAND, I THINK.
NEVER MIND. IT'S OKAY.
HE WANTS TO KISS HER.
HE CAME HERE TO TRY TO GET HIS BODY BACK TO NORMAL.
I THINK IT'S HARD FOR HIM TO STAND BY AND WATCH.

WELL, IF YOU INSIST, I'D LOVE THAT...
I DON'T PLAN ON LEAVING YOUR SIDE!
I'M HERE FOR YOU, LITTLE PRINCESS.
HOT SPRING?
I JUST FOUND A NICE HOT SPRING OVER THERE.
WE CAN THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE LATER. WHY DON'T WE STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT?
NOW I GET IT...
THEN THAT BEAR MUST HAVE BEEN ...?!
THE ANIMALS HERE KNOW THIS AND TAKE A DIP IN IT.
SULFURIC GASES ARE POISONOUS, BUT WATER WITH A SMALL AMOUNT OF SULFUR CAN EASE SKIN PROBLEMS AND INJURIES.

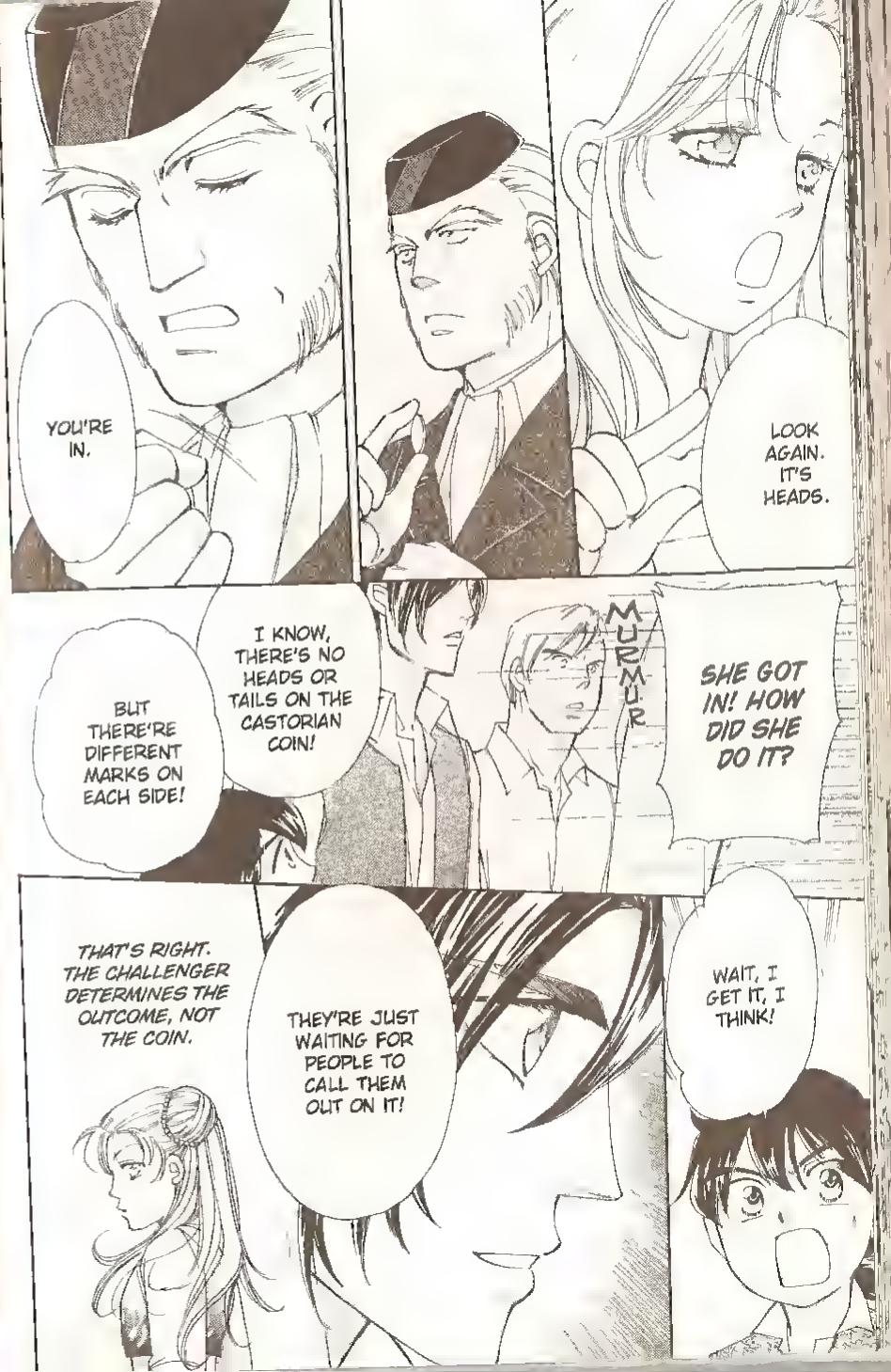

YOU'RE POPOLA?
WAIT, THIS CAN'T BE...
YOU --
WHEN MS. POPOLA WAS YOUNG...
...PEOPLE CALLED HER THE DIAMOND OF CASTORIA DUE TO HER BEAUTY.
LET'S BOIL SOME EGGS.
THE PAINTING INSIDE THE BROOCH WAS HER.
HE KISSED HER? OH SODA...
WHAT ARE YOU STARIN' AT?!
SPLASH!!

WHICH REMINDS ME, WHILE I WAS SEMI-CONSCIOUS ...
IT'S NOT TOO HOT. JUST WARMER THAN BODY TEMP.
THE STARS ARE PRETTY HERE, THE SCENERY IS PERFECT.
WHAT'S THE HOT SPRING LIKE?
FEELS GOOD TO ME.
I FELT SOMEONE TOUCH MY LIPS, I THINK.
WHOA.
I SWEAR IT WASN'T ME!
KYAAAH!
I DIDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU AND SMOOCH YOU!!


Next day at the entrance exam—
SO?
WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS AGAIN?
SO IT'S YOU.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BUILT UP THAT HOT SPRING BUSINESS OVERNIGHT.
TWO ADULTS PLEASE.
HOT SPRING
I WANT TO EASE THE PHYSICAL BURDEN OF THE HARD WORKERS OF CASTORIA.
HOW'S THAT?
NO GOOD, HUH?
THEY'RE DEFINITELY CHEATING!
NOPE, TAILS.
HEADS.
LET'S PLACE A BET. HEADS OR TAILS!
THAT SOUNDS GOOD.


JADE!
WAIT!
OH!
YOU'RE TRYING TO GET A FREE PEEK? PAY UP!!
WE NEED TO MAKE A SIGN RIGHT AWAY!
YES, MS. POPOLA?
I MAY NOT HAVE FOUND ANYTHING IN THESE MINES, BUT I DID FIND SOMETHING!
WE'RE GOING TO HIT IT BIG WITH THIS!

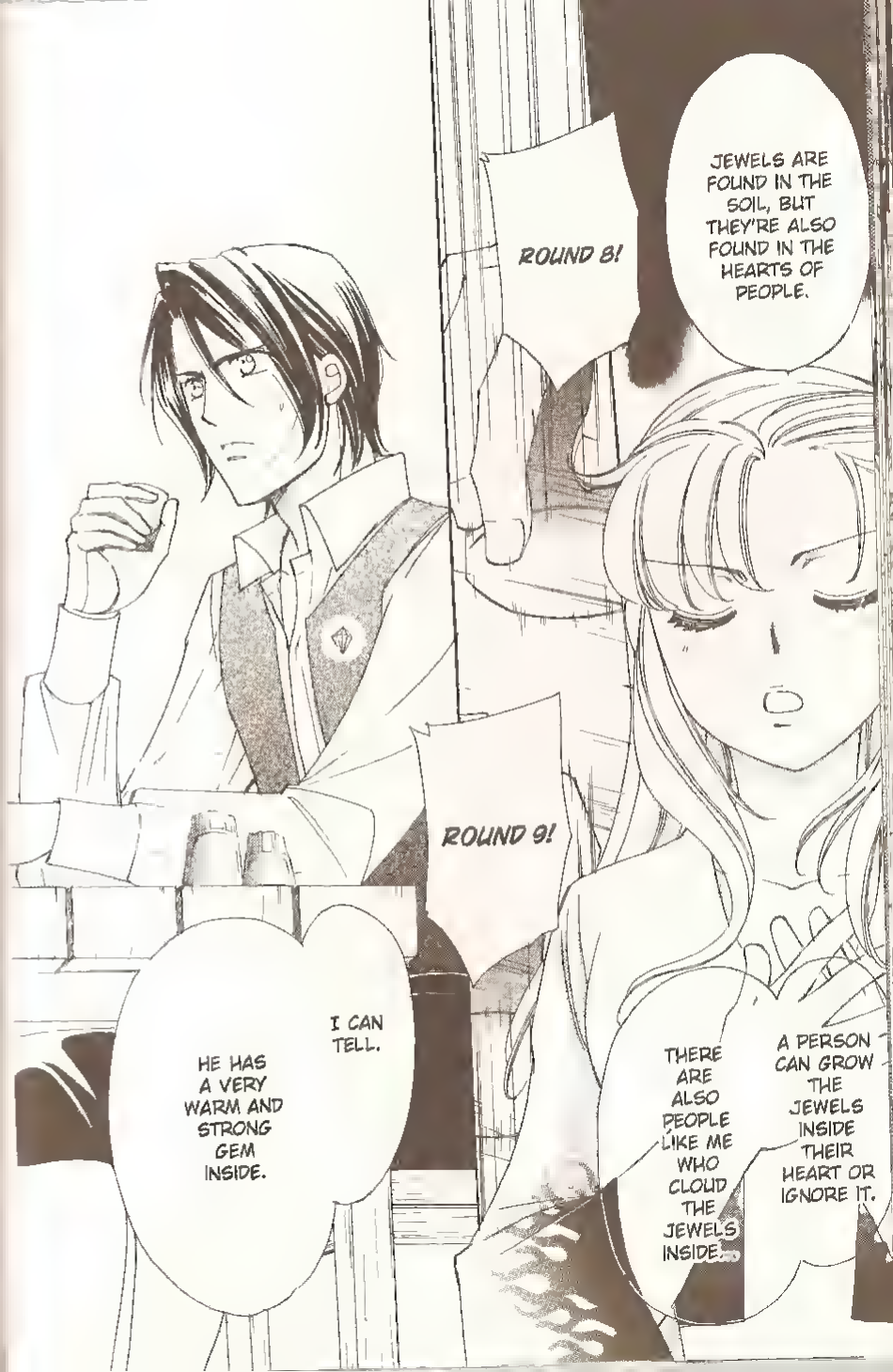
THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO SURVIVE IN CASTORIA.
THE ONE WHO DOESN'T GIVE UP AND TRIES TO FIND HIS WAY IN NO MATTER WHAT IS THE VICTOR.
IF YOU'RE EASILY DEFEATED OR HAVE MIXED FEELINGS, YOU WON'T BE ALLOWED IN.
THAT'S THE RITUAL OF ENTRY FOR THE POLICE HERE.
YOU'RE IN.
ALL RIGHT, WHAT'S YOUR BET TODAY?
THIS IS YOUR THIRD TIME TODAY.
MAY I SUGGEST A DIFFERENT BET?
INTER-ESTING. THAT'S HOW YOU PLAY IT, EH?
SO, GIMME THE DETAILS.


YOU'RE IN.
LOOK AGAIN. IT'S HEADS.
MURMUR
SHE GOT IN! HOW DID SHE DO IT?
I KNOW, THERE'S NO HEADS OR TAILS ON THE CASTORIAN COIN!
BUT THERE'RE DIFFERENT MARKS ON EACH SIDE!
THAT'S RIGHT. THE CHALLENGER DETERMINES THE OUTCOME, NOT THE COIN.
THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR PEOPLE TO CALL THEM OUT ON IT!
WAIT, I GET IT, I THINK!

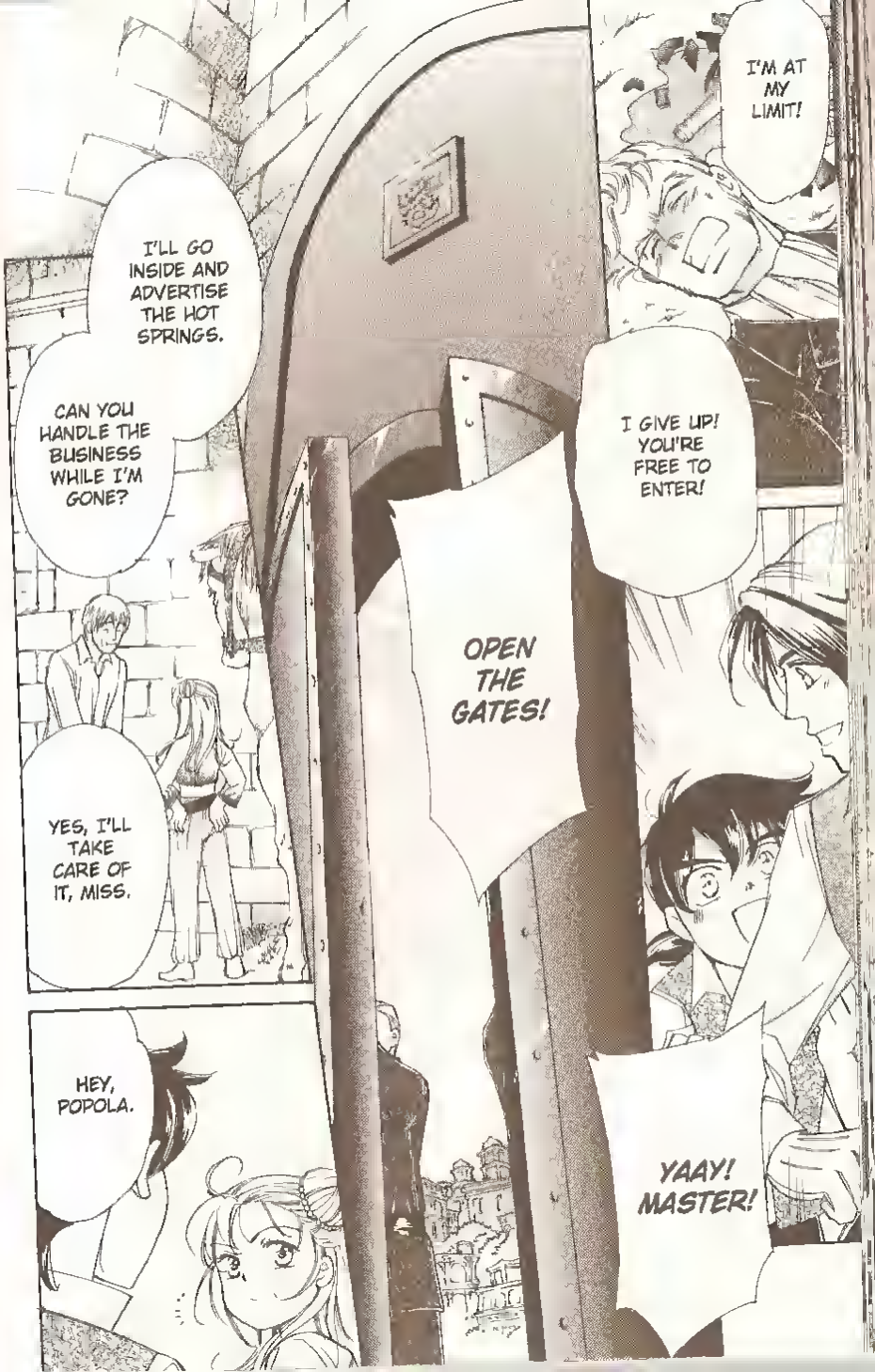
DON'T REGRET YOUR DECISION, SON.
MUMBLE
TMP
DID YOU KNOW...
I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D DO SOMETHING SO CRAZY...
ROUND THREE!
YOU NEVER KNOW!
THAT GUY'S STUPID. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO HE'S CHALLENGING.
THAT GUY KNOWS HOW TO HOLD HIS DRINK!
NEXT! SECOND ROUND!

I CHALLENGE YOU TO A DRINKING GAME.
MY MASTER'S GETTIN' DOWN AND DIRTY---!?
WOW!
YES, SIR!
ALL RIGHT, BRING OUT THE BOOZE AND THE GLASSES RIGHT AWAY!
THUD
SLAM

CLINK
RIGHT...
14!
15!
16!
17!
AS A BASILISK, HE WAS FORCED TO GIVE UP A LOT IN HIS LIFE.
HE'S ACTUALLY A VERY STRONG--

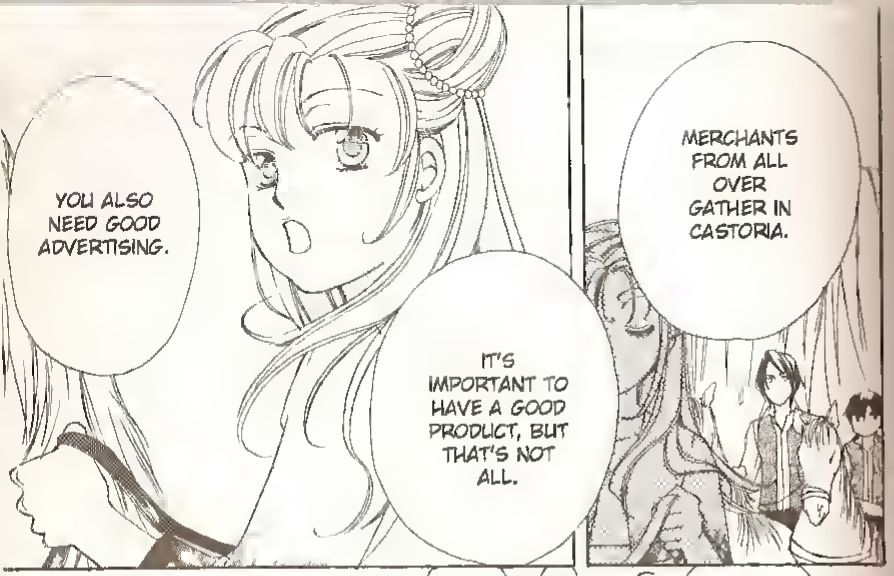

ROUND 8!
JEWELS ARE FOUND IN THE SOIL, BUT THEY'RE ALSO FOUND IN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE.
ROUND 9!
I CAN TELL.
HE HAS A VERY WARM AND STRONG GEM INSIDE.
THERE ARE ALSO PEOPLE LIKE ME WHO CLOUD THE JEWELS INSIDE...
A PERSON CAN GROW THE JEWELS INSIDE THEIR HEART OR IGNORE IT.

SLICK
Y'KNOW, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE HOTNESS PERSONIFIED.
OR EVEN MANLY
...
WITH THIS, I'LL MAKE YOU PRETTIER THAN A DIAMOND. IN EXCHANGE, WILL YOU GUIDE ME?
HERE'S SKIN TONER THAT I MADE.
WHY NOT, WE HAVE A DEAL.
HM, IT MAY BE FUN TO POLISH A WIMP LIKE YOU INTO SOMETHING MORE.
ARGENT, ABOUT THE STONE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT-- I HEARD ABOUT ITS EXISTENCE IN MINO VALLEY.
OBSIDIANS ARE KNOWN AS HEALING STONES. IT'S ONE OF HER FAVORITE STONES.
YOU PROBABLY WON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH MORE THAN AN OBSIDIAN...
WELL...
IS THAT A COMPLIMENT? AN INSULT?
I DON'T GET YOU!
BUT MAYBE YOU CAN BRING SOMETHING ABOUT FOR YOURSELF.
I HAD NO INTEREST IN RISKING IT...


I'M AT MY LIMIT!
I'LL GO INSIDE AND ADVERTISE THE HOT SPRINGS.
CAN YOU HANDLE THE BUSINESS WHILE I'M GONE?
I GIVE UP! YOU'RE FREE TO ENTER!
OPEN THE GATES!
YES, I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, MISS.
HEY, POPOLA.
YAAY! MASTER!

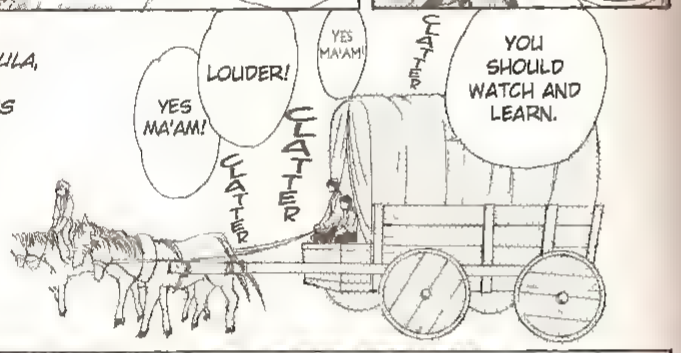
Recipe 22 • Mino Valley

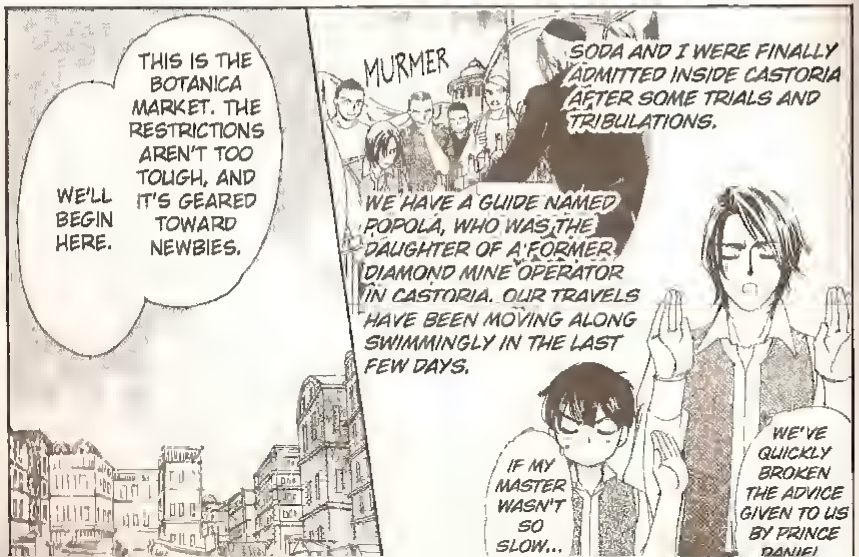
THANKS, JADE.
GOOD LUCK, MISS.
THE FUN IS IN POLISHING THEM UP!
YOU'VE MATURED, SODA.
MASTER, I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW...
...WHY YOU LIKE FUSSY WOMEN.
?
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
STOP DRIVING SO SLOW!
I'M SODA, THE APOTHECARY'S APPRENTICE.
MY DREAM IS TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT APOTHECARY ONE DAY AND HAVE A WIFE WHO SPARKLES LIKE A DIAMOND.
SUUUURE.
ME? I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING.
Recipe 21/The End


YOU ALSO NEED GOOD ADVERTISING.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A GOOD PRODUCT, BUT THAT'S NOT ALL.
MERCHANTS FROM ALL OVER GATHER IN CASTORIA.

DEAR LADY PRIMULA, ANY CHANGES BACK HOME? THIS IS ARGENT, THE FORMER ROYAL APOTHECARY.

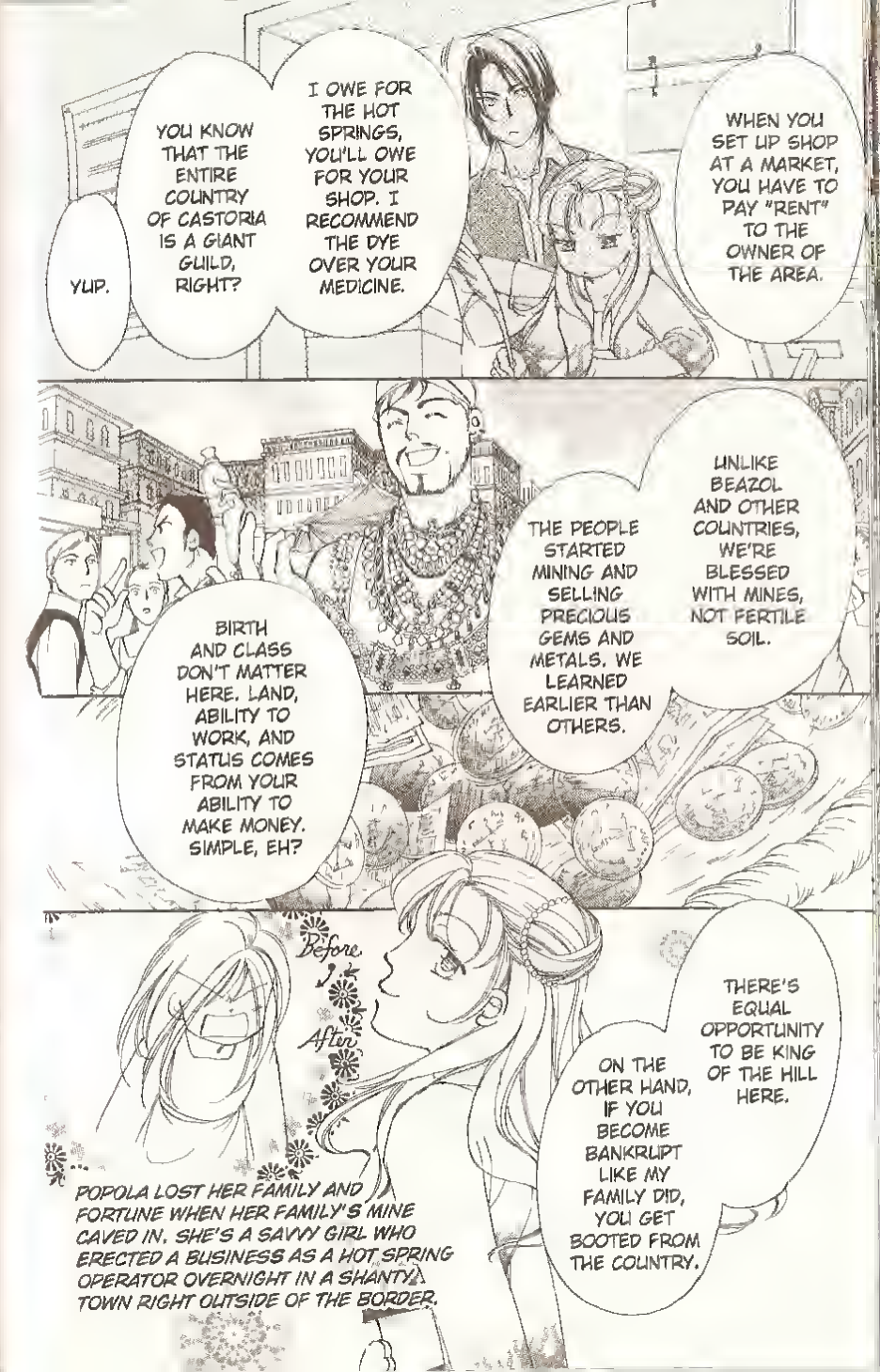
I'M NOT USED TO WRITING LETTERS, SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...




THIS IS THE BOTANICA MARKET. THE RESTRICTIONS AREN'T TOO TOUGH, AND IT'S GEARED TOWARD NEWBIES.
WE'LL BEGIN HERE.
MURMER
SODA AND I WERE FINALLY ADMITTED INSIDE CASTORIA AFTER SOME TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS.
WE HAVE A GUIDE NAMED POPOLA, WHO WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A FORMER DIAMOND MINE OPERATOR IN CASTORIA. OUR TRAVELS HAVE BEEN MOVING ALONG SWIMMINGLY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS.
IF MY MASTER WASN'T SO SLOW...
WE'VE QUICKLY BROKEN THE ADVICE GIVEN TO US BY PRINCE DANIEL

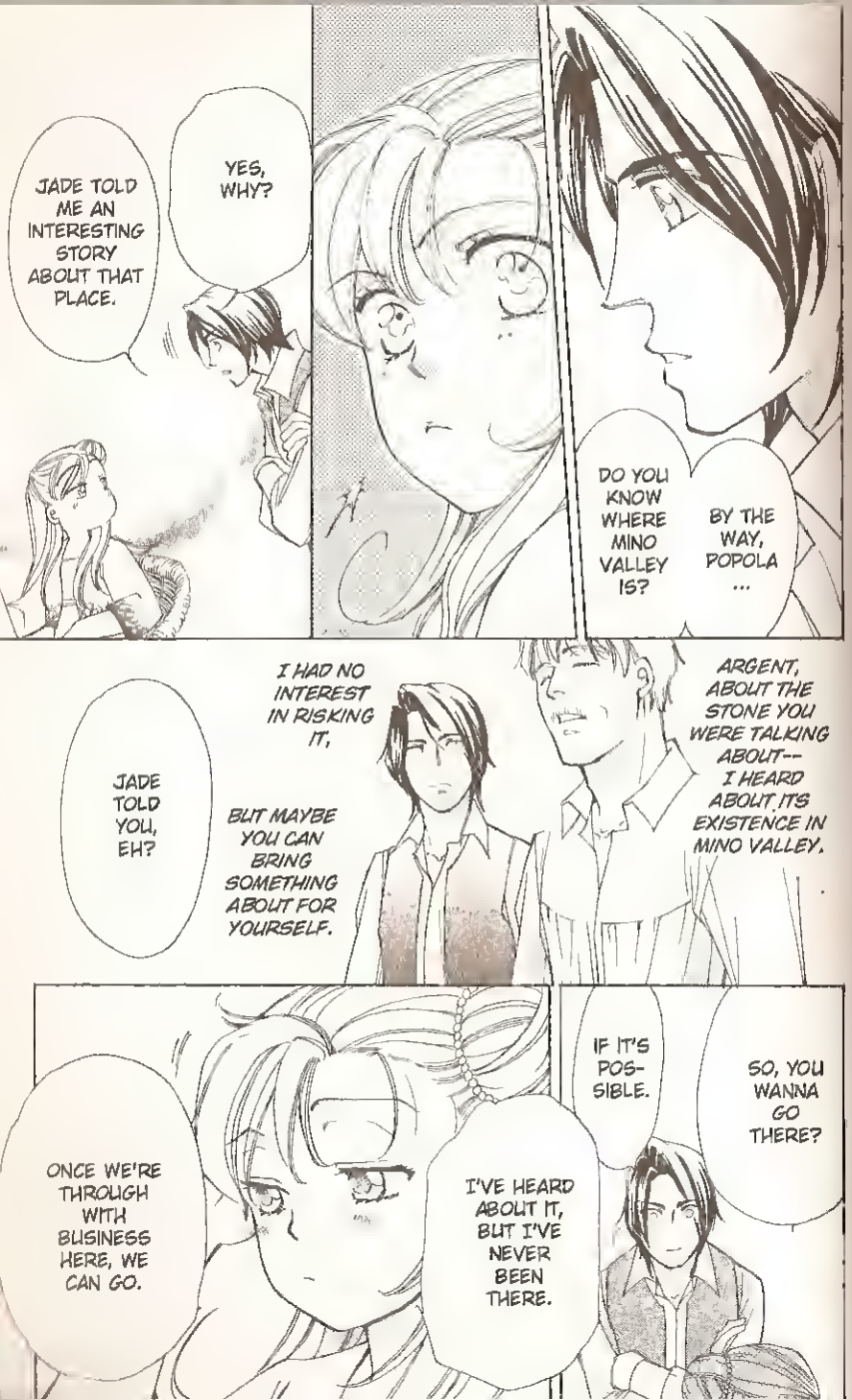
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS SWORD CUT.
ONE SWIPE OF THE OINTMENT AND HE'S HEALED!
WOOOW
EVERYONE, COME CLOSER! THIS OINTMENT WILL CURE ANY KIND OF WOUND INSTANTLY!
WE SHOW A SPECIAL TOAD A MIRROR. HE EXCRETES FLUIDS WHEN HE SEES HIS UGLY SELF IN THE MIRROR, AND VIOLA!
TAKE A LOOK, MASTER!
CLATTER
SO THAT'S ONE WAY TO MARKET YOUR GOODS.
WELL, TOADS CAN EXCRETE NUMBING CHEMICALS FROM THEIR SKIN.
CLATTER
CLATTER
HE'S ANOTHER APOTHECARY. THAT OINTMENT'S GOTTA BE SNAKE OIL!

WE CAN GET AWAY FROM BEING SERVANTS HERE! WE SHOULD MAKE A KILLING AND RETURN TO BEAZOL!
NO WONDER THEY SET UP BETS IN ORDER TO ENTER THE COUNTRY...
IT SOUNDS LIKE QUITE A GAMBLE.
THERE ARE OTHER RULES, BUT WE'LL GET AROUND TO THEM EVENTUALLY. FIRST, LET'S SET UP SHOP. TIME IS MONEY.
WELL...
EVERYONE, I HAVE A NEW BUSINESS THAT YOU'VE NEVER SEEN!
TRUE.
SOAK IN THIS MIRACLE WATER AND EASE YOUR TIRED BODY, IMPROVE ANY SKIN PROBLEMS! EXPERIENCE BETTER HEALTH TODAY!
THIS WATER IS NO ORDINARY WATER!
AFTER YOUR BATH, SPEND THE NIGHT AT THE INN ACROSS THE WAY! I HAVE COUPONS HERE FOR FREE BREAKFAST THERE!
IT HAS SULFUR AND CARBONATED NATRIUM. IT'S CHOCK FULL OF MINERALS TO BENEFIT YOUR HEALTH!
THE END

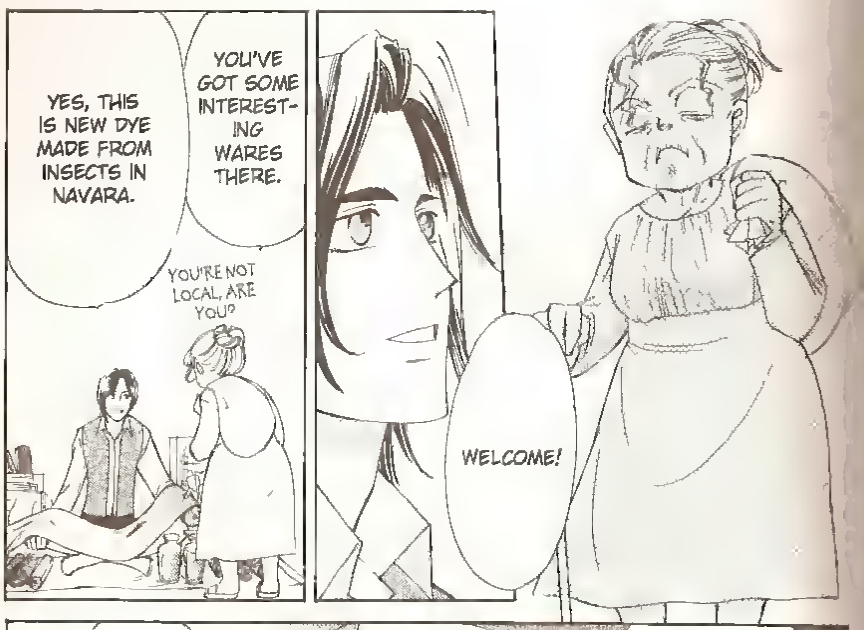

YUP.
YOU KNOW THAT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY OF CASTORIA IS A GIANT GUILD, RIGHT?
I OWE FOR THE HOT SPRINGS, YOU'LL OWE FOR YOUR SHOP. I RECOMMEND THE DYE OVER YOUR MEDICINE.
WHEN YOU SET UP SHOP AT A MARKET, YOU HAVE TO PAY "RENT" TO THE OWNER OF THE AREA.
BIRTH AND CLASS DON'T MATTER HERE. LAND, ABILITY TO WORK, AND STATUS COMES FROM YOUR ABILITY TO MAKE MONEY. SIMPLE, EH?
THE PEOPLE STARTED MINING AND SELLING PRECIOUS GEMS AND METALS. WE LEARNED EARLIER THAN OTHERS.
UNLIKE BEAZOL AND OTHER COUNTRIES, WE'RE BLESSED WITH MINES, NOT FERTILE SOIL.
Before
After
POPOLA LOST HER FAMILY AND FORTUNE WHEN HER FAMILY'S MINE CAVED IN. SHE'S A SAVVY GIRL WHO ERECTED A BUSINESS AS A HOT SPRING OPERATOR OVERNIGHT IN A SHANTY TOWN RIGHT OUTSIDE OF THE BORDER.
ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU BECOME BANKRUPT LIKE MY FAMILY DID, YOU GET BOOTED FROM THE COUNTRY.
THERE'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO BE KING OF THE HILL HERE.

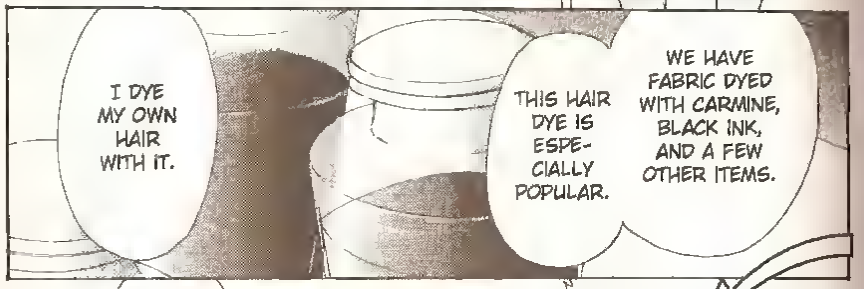
I WANT YOU, NOT THE DYE!
OH MY GOSH!
SEE, YOU CAN DO IT!
FEH!
HE'S BECOMING MORE BOLD BY THE MINUTE.
TO REGAIN THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR YOUTH, TRY OUR PRODUCTS!
AFTER BATHING, IF YOU DISCOVER GRAY HAIRS, TRY THIS HAIR DYE!
KNOW THAT PEOPLE AND VALUES ARE DIFFERENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES. I EXPERIENCED THIS IN NAVARA.
HOWEVER, WITH THE FREEDOMS IN THIS COUNTRY...
WHEN WE MEET AGAIN, I WANT TO SHOWER YOU WITH A PASSIONATE EMBRACE AND A MILLION KISSES...
IT SEEMS AS IF ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE HERE FOR ANYONE. I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I WAS BORN AGAIN.
AS FOR THE STONE TO DETOXIFY MY BODY, I WAS ABLE TO GARNER CLUES FROM JADE, POPOLA'S SERVANT. ONE DAY, I FEEL I MAY BE ABLE TO GET CLOSER TO YOU.

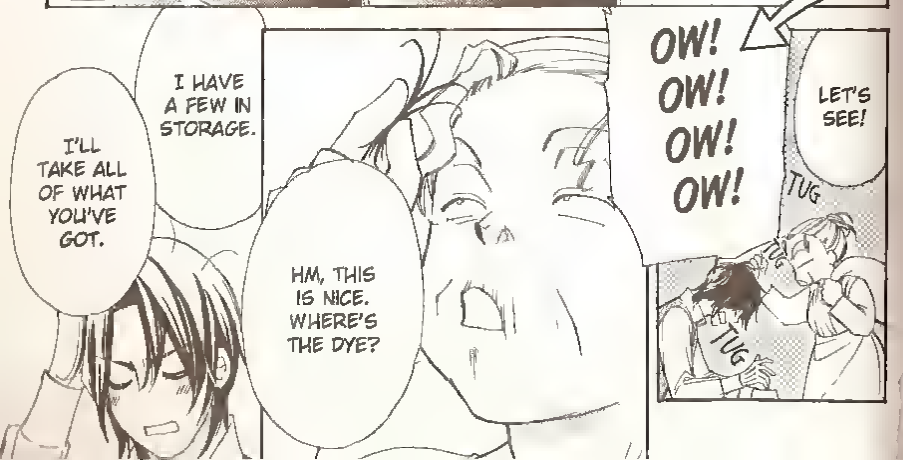
OH WOW! LOOK AT ALL THE PEOPLE!
IT'S NOT TOO HOT.
A SOAK, EH? THAT SOUNDS NICE.
WHAT?
WELL, WE GOTTA THINK ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE...
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! MAKE A PITCH!
MM?
THE CARMINE DYE HERE FEELS GOOD AGAINST YOUR SKIN AND THE COLORS WILL BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY!
AFTER CLEANING UP IN THE MINERAL WATER, HOW ABOUT FRESH ROBES FOR YOUR FRESH BODY?
EVERYONE COME CLOSER! OVER HERE!
FLUTTER


JADE TOLD ME AN INTERESTING STORY ABOUT THAT PLACE.
YES, WHY?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE MINO VALLEY IS?
BY THE WAY, POPOLA ...
JADE TOLD YOU, EH?
I HAD NO INTEREST IN RISKING IT,
BUT MAYBE YOU CAN BRING SOMETHING ABOUT FOR YOURSELF.
ARGENT, ABOUT THE STONE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT-- I HEARD ABOUT ITS EXISTENCE IN MINO VALLEY.
ONCE WE'RE THROUGH WITH BUSINESS HERE, WE CAN GO.
I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT, BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.
IF IT'S POS-SIBLE.
SO, YOU WANNA GO THERE?

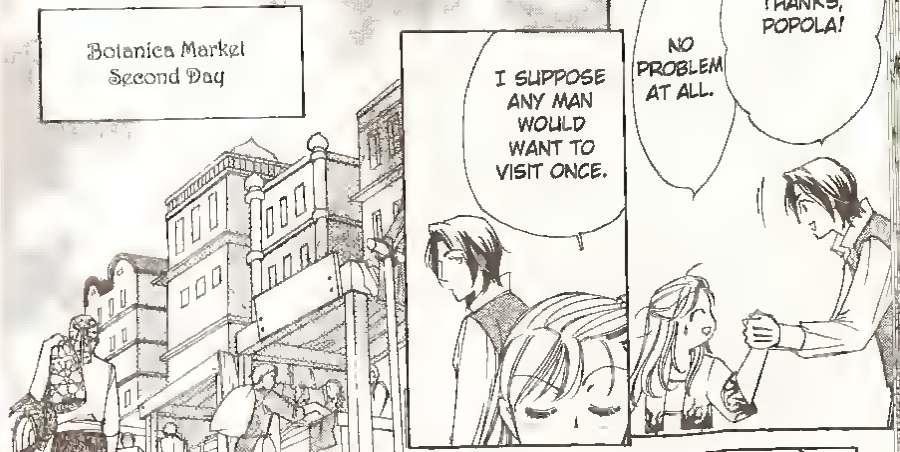
PRINCE LORCA WANTED ME TO WRITE TO THE PRINCESS AND GAVE ME INK.
I'M WRITING A REPORT!
NO NEED FOR EX-CUSES.
CAN YOU BE QUIET?
IF YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE A LOVE LETTER, YOU SHOULD BE MORE UPFRONT.
SODA!
SORRY ...
BUT REMEMBER THAT CASTORIA CENSORS LETTERS GOING OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
NOTHING AGAINST LOVE LETTERS ...
I CAN'T BELIEVE MERCURY HAS SPIKED IN PRICE.
THE TRENDS HAVE CHANGED IN THE SHORT WHILE THAT I WAS GONE.
GOTTA RESEARCH-
MUMBLE
AS A MERCHANT, YOU HAVE TO KEEP RECORDS AND PREDICT THE TRENDS BY DOING A DAILY ANALYSIS.
IF CERTAIN ITEMS SOLD WELL TODAY, THEY COULD BOMB THE DAY AFTER.
RUNNING THE HOT SPRINGS
POPOLA, WHO ARE YOU WRITING TO?
JADE?
NO, IDIOT. I'M MAKING UP A PRICE SHEET.

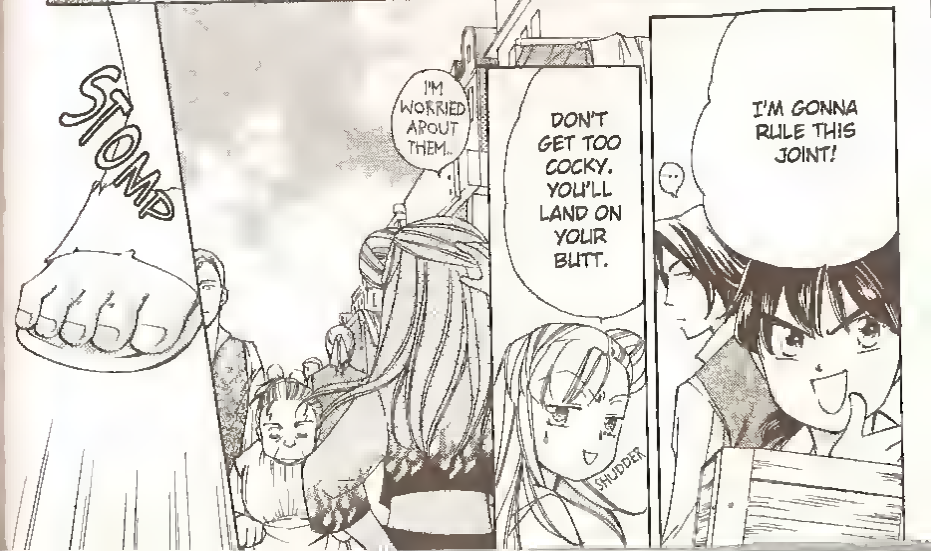



I DYE MY OWN HAIR WITH IT.
THIS HAIR DYE IS ESPECIALLY POPULAR.
WE HAVE FABRIC DYED WITH CARMINE, BLACK INK, AND A FEW OTHER ITEMS.



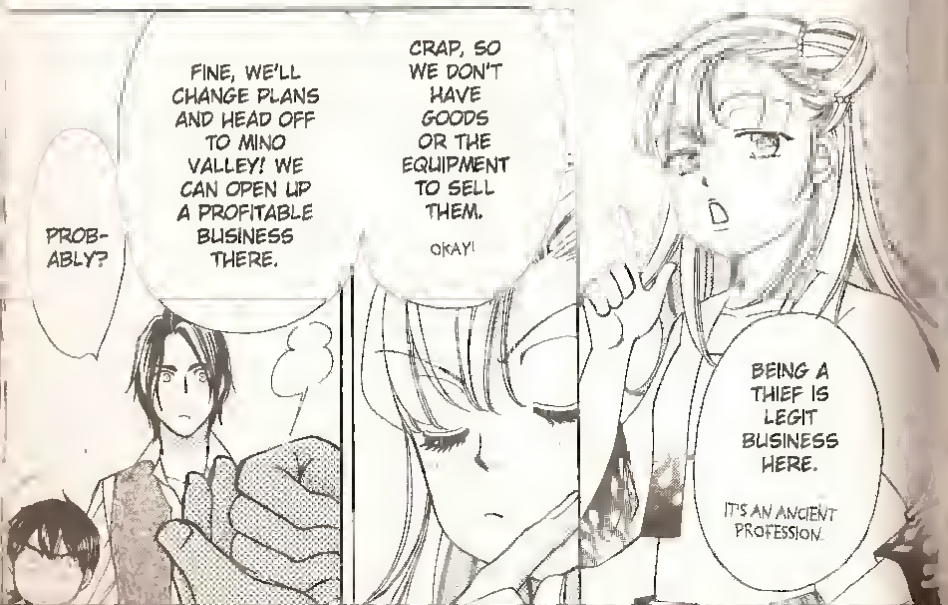
Botanica Market
Second Day

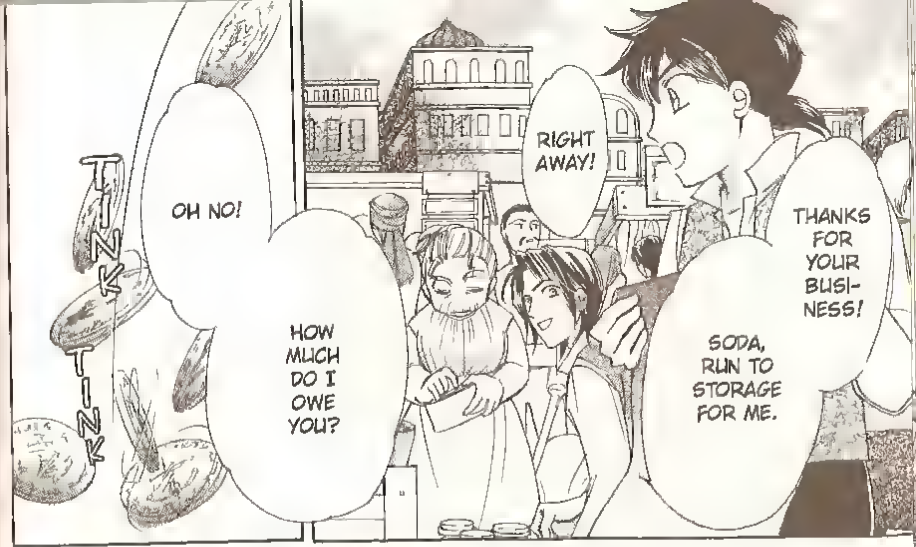


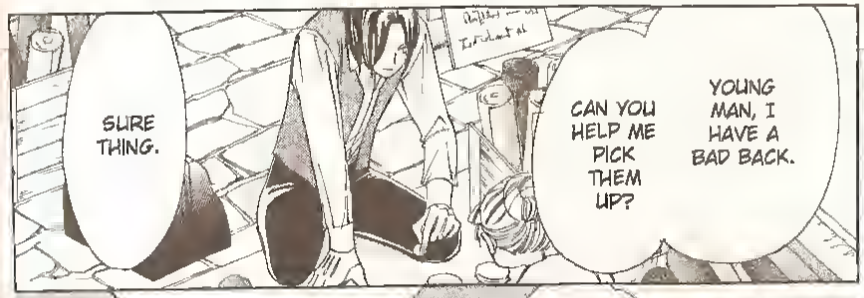


SO, WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

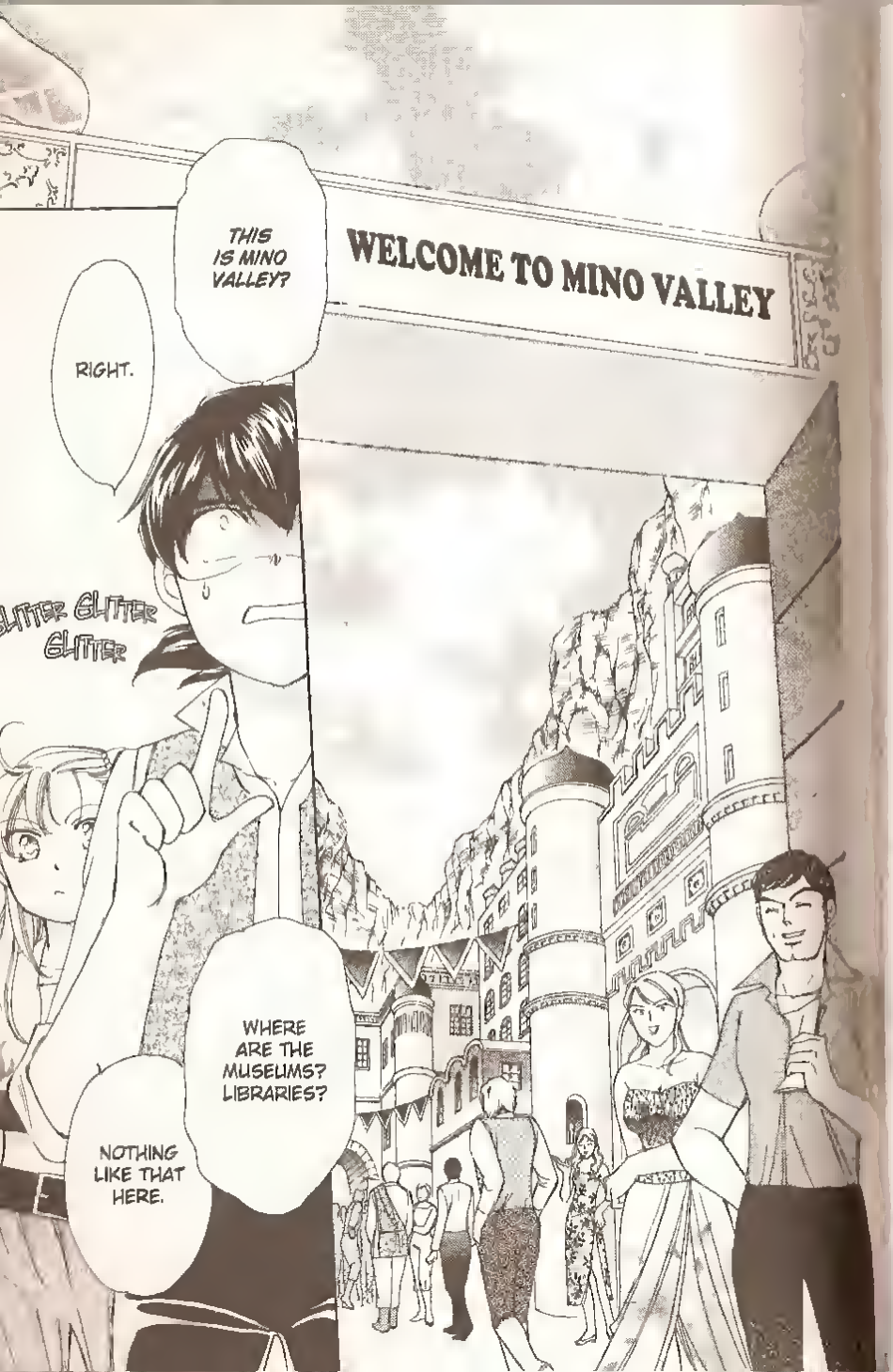
NOPE. HERE, ROBBERY IS CONSIDERED YOUR LOSS.
WHAT?
I WARNED YOU!
WE SHOULD REPORT THIS TO THE POLICE!
OUR GOODS, MEDICINE, ANYTHING OF VALUE.

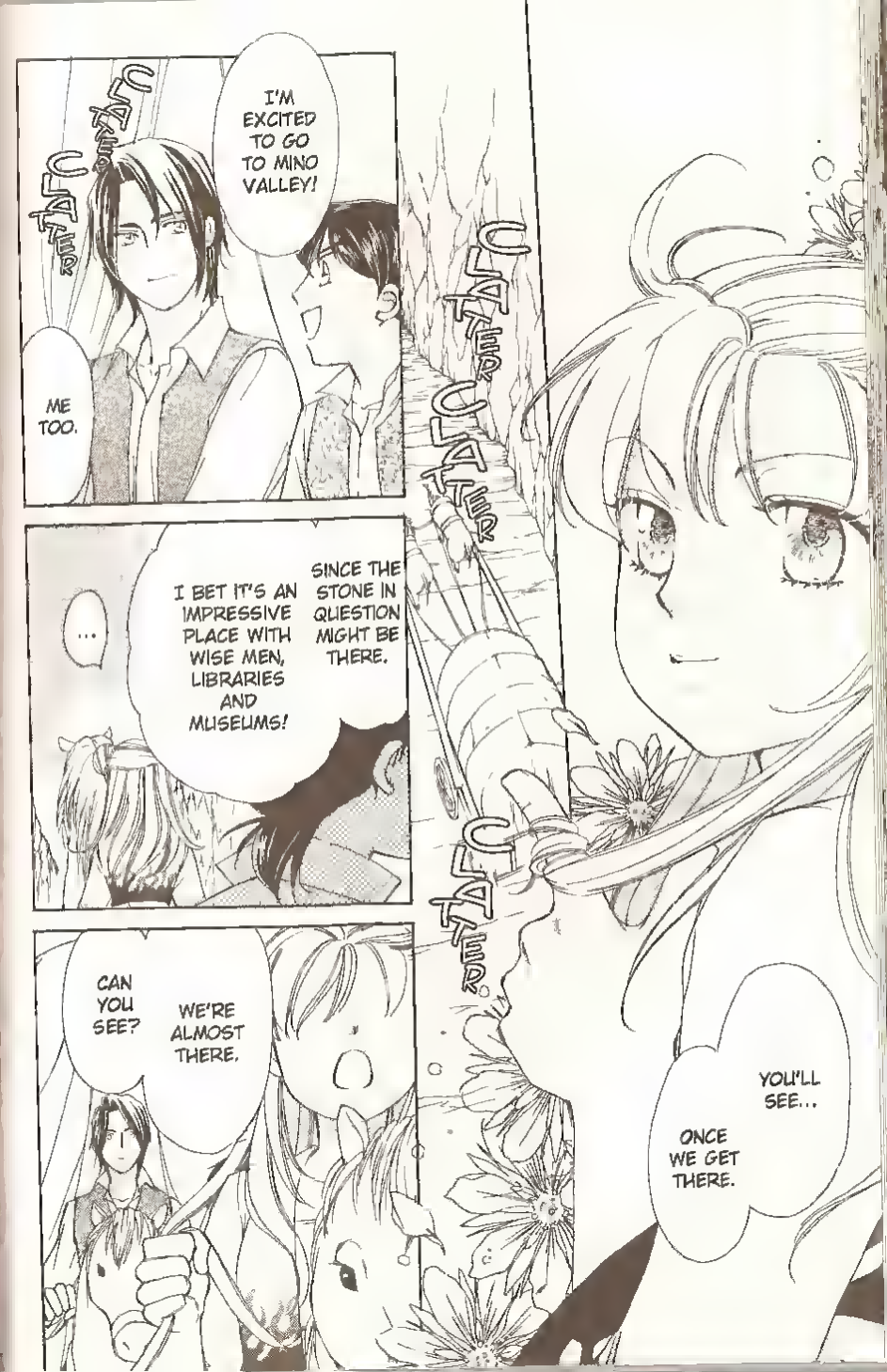

FINE, WE'LL CHANGE PLANS AND HEAD OFF TO MINO VALLEY! WE CAN OPEN UP A PROFITABLE BUSINESS THERE.
PROB-ABLY?
CRAP, SO WE DON'T HAVE GOODS OR THE EQUIPMENT TO SELL THEM.
OKAY!
BEING A THIEF IS LEGIT BUSINESS HERE.
IT'S AN ANCIENT PROFESSION.

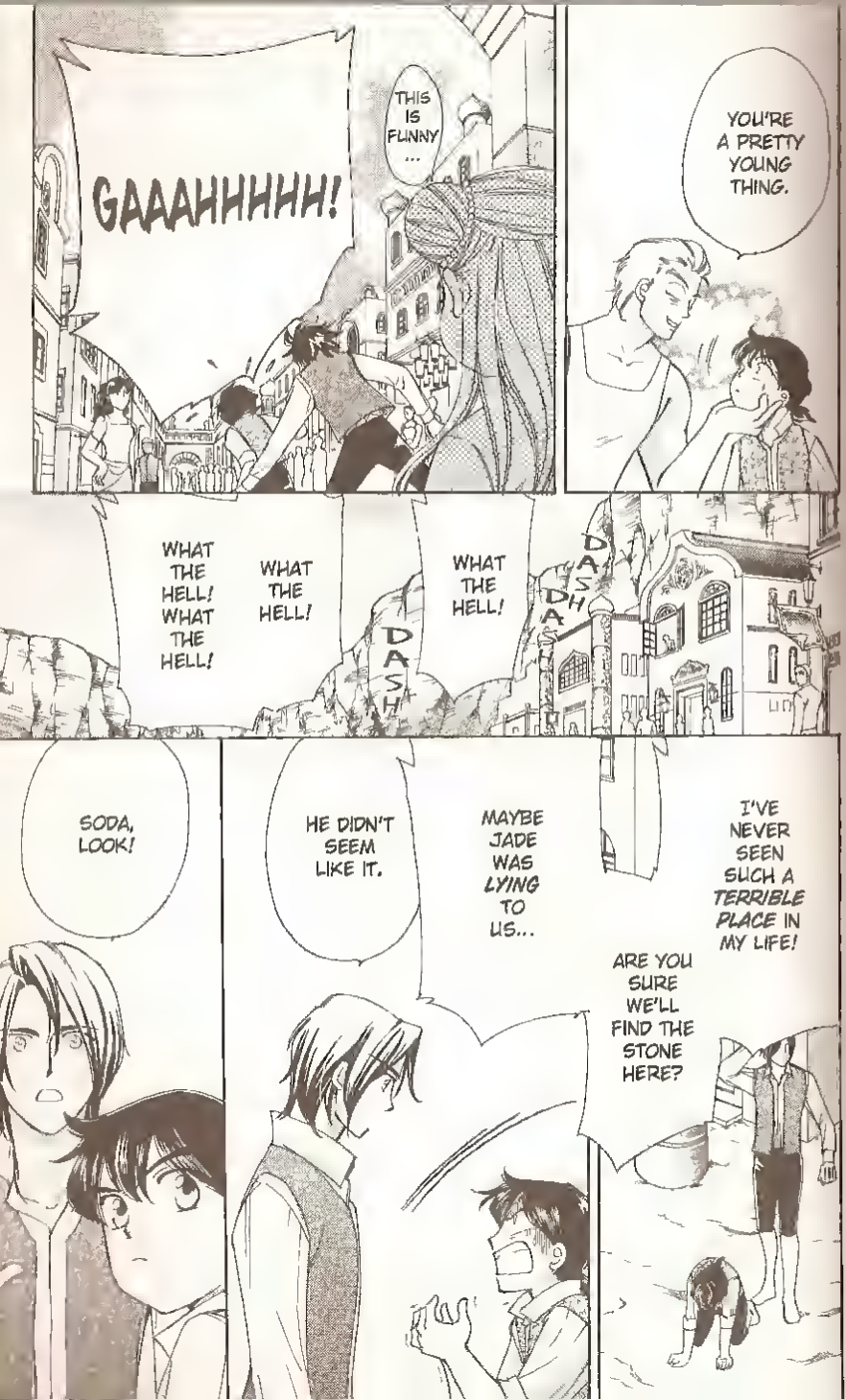

TINK TINK
OH NO!
HOW MUCH DO I OWE YOU?
RIGHT AWAY!
THANKS FOR YOUR BUSI-NESS!
SODA, RUN TO STORAGE FOR ME.


SURE THING.
CAN YOU HELP ME PICK THEM UP?
YOUNG MAN, I HAVE A BAD BACK.

SHE'S ROBBING YOU!!!
WHAT?
MASTER, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HERE'S 5 LIRS, 6 LIRS...


WELCOME TO MINO VALLEY
THIS IS MINO VALLEY?
RIGHT.
GLITTER GLITTER GLITTER
WHERE ARE THE MUSEUMS? LIBRARIES?
NOTHING LIKE THAT HERE.


I'M EXCITED TO GO TO MINO VALLEY!
CLATTER CLATTER
ME TOO.
I BET IT'S AN IMPRESSIVE PLACE WITH WISE MEN, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS!
SINCE THE STONE IN QUESTION MIGHT BE THERE.
...
CAN YOU SEE?
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
CLATTER CLATTER CLATTER
YOU'LL SEE...
ONCE WE GET THERE.

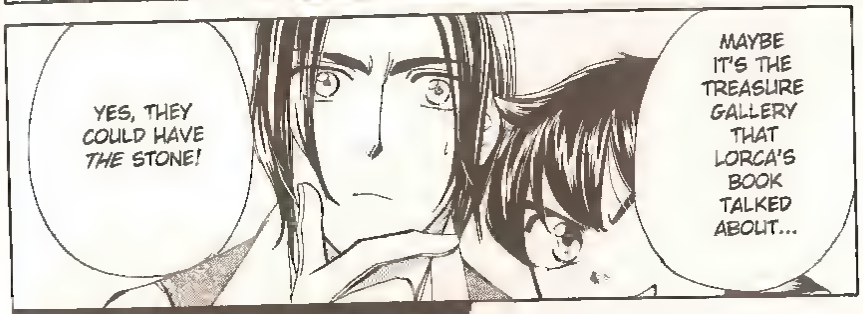

GAAAHHHHH!
THIS IS FUNNY...
YOU'RE A PRETTY YOUNG THING.
WHAT THE HELL! WHAT THE HELL!
WHAT THE HELL!
WHAT THE HELL!
DASH
DASH
DASH
SODA, LOOK!
HE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE IT.
MAYBE JADE WAS *LYING* TO US...
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A *TERRIBLE PLACE* IN MY LIFE!
ARE YOU SURE WE'LL FIND THE STONE HERE?

WE HAVE MINERS AND GEM BROKERS HERE. THEY'RE MAINLY MEN. THIS IS A RED LIGHT DISTRICT OF SORTS FOR THE MEN WHO GATHER HERE.
OVER THAT CANYON, THERE ARE TONS OF HUGE MINES.
RED LIGHT WHAT...?
WE'VE NEVER SEEN YOU AROUND BEFORE, HOT STUFF!
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
DO YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY?
IF YOU DON'T, WE'LL GIVE YOU A GREAT DEAL!
WELL UH...
WE'RE NOT THAT WAY...
WE GOT A BRAND NEW, CUTE GIRL LAST MONTH...
THEN ARE YOU GONNA GO MY WAY?
GET BOXED

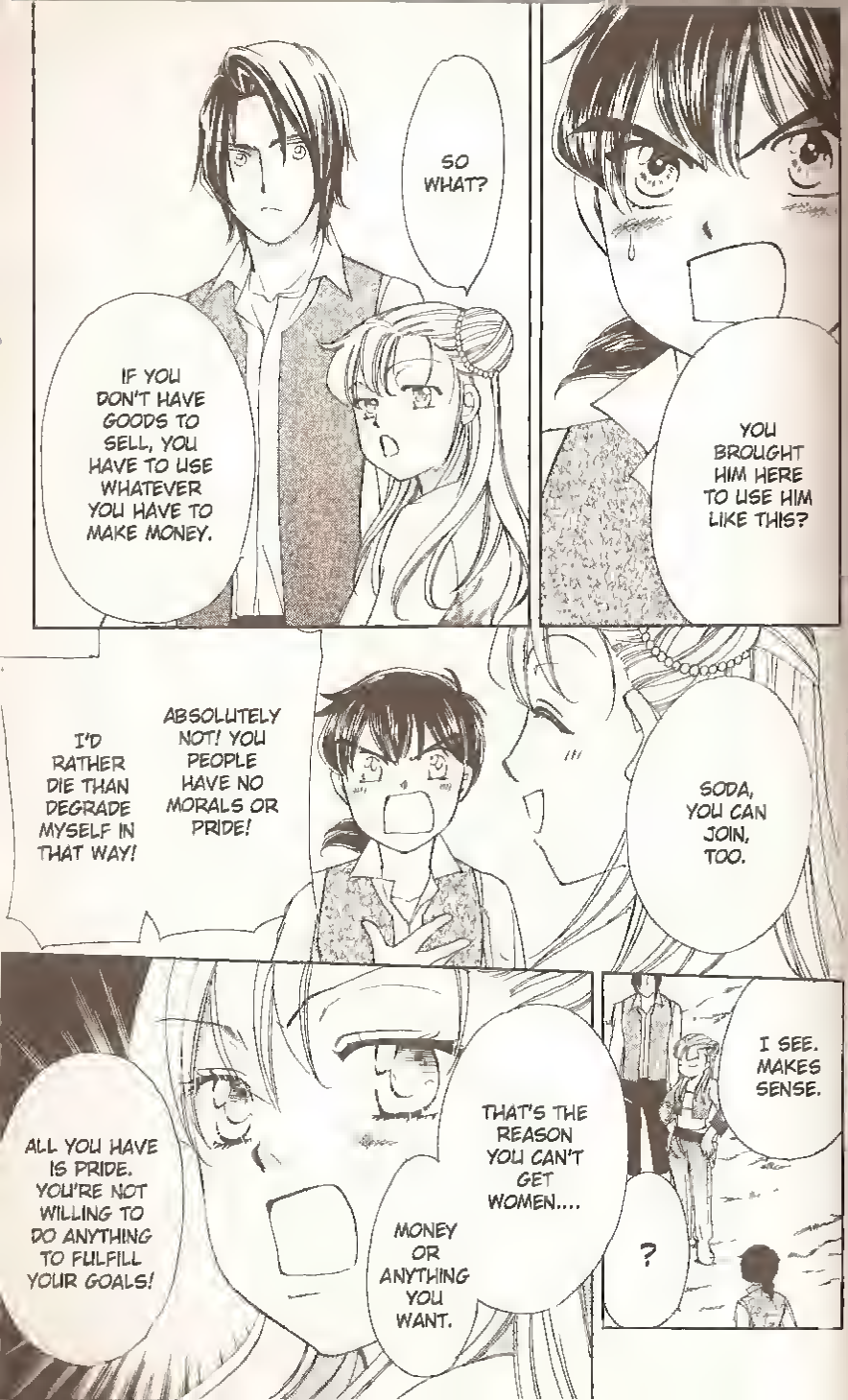
YOU WENT TO THE SECRET TREASURE GALLERY? YOU GUYS ARE TOO FUNNY!
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
IT SAID SECRET TREASURES, BUT I HAD NO IDEA...
CASTO-RIA'S REALLY PER-VERTED.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO COME HERE, RIGHT?
YOU'RE AN APPRENTICE. DON'T BE SO WIMPY.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS TOWN?
IF WE KNEW, WE WOULD HAVE STAYED AWAY!
SOME WOMEN CAN EARN 100,000 LIRS A NIGHT!
DON'T BE DISRESPECT-FUL OF PROS-TITUTES! IT'S THE WORLD'S OLDEST PROFESSION AND A LEGIT BUSINESS!
I THOUGHT THIS PLACE WOULD BE FILLED WITH SMART PEOPLE AND CULTURE. INSTEAD, IT'S A CESSPOOL OF HOOKERS AND COMMON GEMS!
WE'RE HERE TO FIND THE STONE THAT WILL DETOXIFY A BASILISK'S BODY!

SECRET TREASURES. I BET THEY HAVE SECRET STONES THERE...?
SECRE
TREASU
GALLER

SECRET TREASURE GALLERY

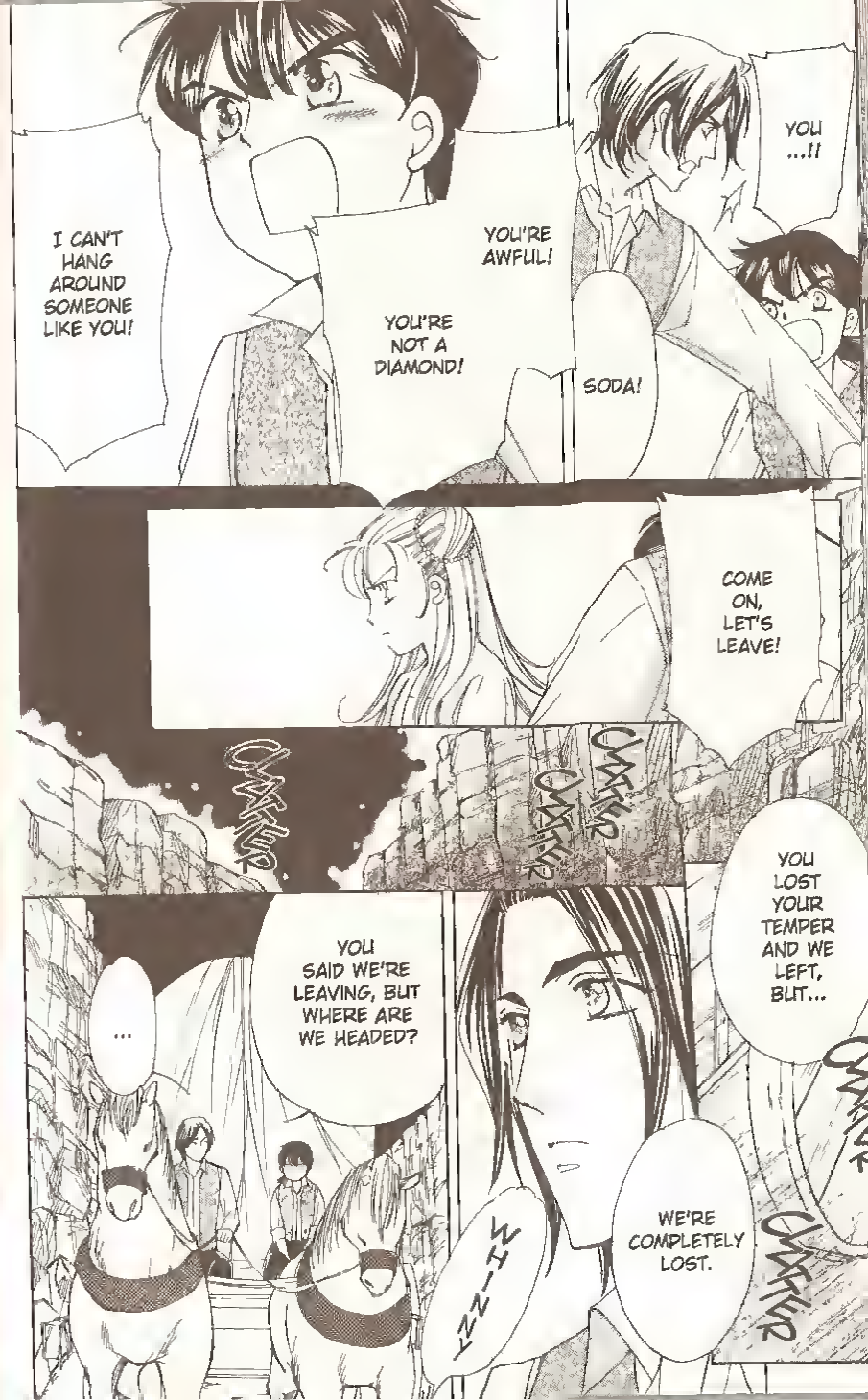

YES, THEY COULD HAVE THE STONE!
MAYBE IT'S THE TREASURE GALLERY THAT LORCA'S BOOK TALKED ABOUT...

LET'S GO!
OUR TRIP MAY BE OVER SOON. MM!


SO WHAT?
IF YOU DON'T HAVE GOODS TO SELL, YOU HAVE TO USE WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO MAKE MONEY.
YOU BROUGHT HIM HERE TO USE HIM LIKE THIS?
I'D RATHER DIE THAN DEGRADE MYSELF IN THAT WAY!
ABSOLUTELY NOT! YOU PEOPLE HAVE NO MORALS OR PRIDE!
SODA, YOU CAN JOIN, TOO.
ALL YOU HAVE IS PRIDE. YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO FULFILL YOUR GOALS!
THAT'S THE REASON YOU CAN'T GET WOMEN....
MONEY OR ANYTHING YOU WANT.
I SEE. MAKES SENSE.
?

WHAT?
ARGENT, YOU CAN TAKE ON CUSTOMERS.
POINT
IF I WAS A BIT OLDER, I WOULD HAVE JOINED THE WOMEN HERE.
I FIGURED WE CAN STILL MAKE MONEY HERE, THOUGH. I HAVE AN IDEA.
THE WOMEN HERE ARE TIRED FROM SERVICING THE MEN.
YOU CAN SERVICE THEM IN RETURN.
DON'T WORRY. WITH YOUR LOOKS AND KNOWLEDGE AS AN APOTHECARY, WE CAN DO THIS! YOU HAVE TO USE WHAT YOU HAVE.
I HAVE A SPECIAL TECHNIQUE IN MIND.
POPOLA, YOU...
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I'M POISONOUS, REMEMBER?

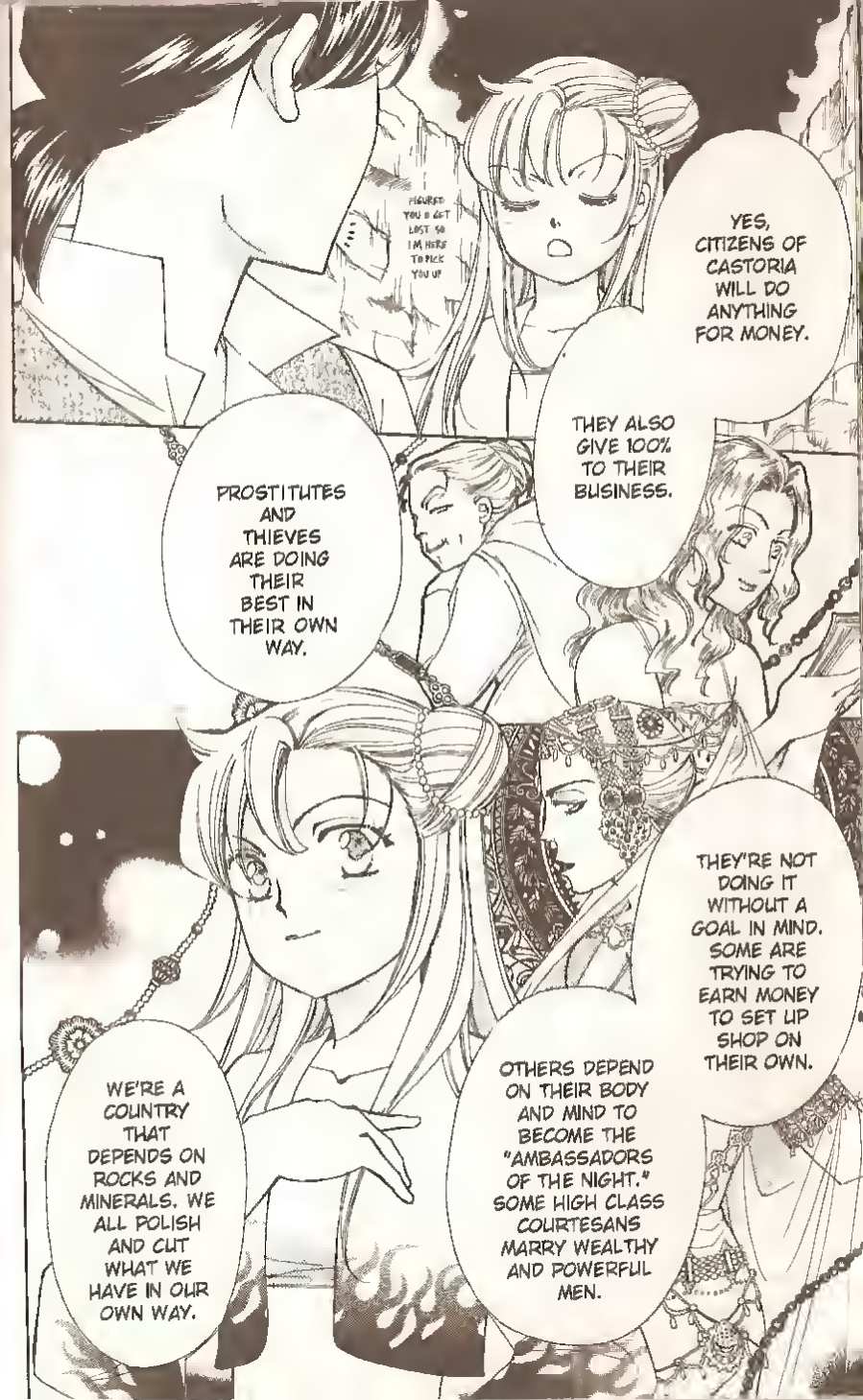
AREN'T YOU MAD THAT SHE WAS TREATING YOU LIKE SOME INANIMATE MERCHANDISE?
WE NEED A GUIDE. WE SHOULD GO BACK AND APOLOGIZE TO POPOLA.
SHE DOES HAVE A POINT.
NEVER! I REFUSE!
FUNDS... THAT REMINDS ME. I'M STARVING.
HERE YOU GO!
THRUST
WANNA SPEND THE NIGHT WITH ME?
THAT REQUIRES FUNDS, OR SOMETHING TO MAKE MONEY WITH...
THIS SOCIETY HAS NO CLASS SYSTEM. THAT MEANS EACH PERSON HAS TO FIND HIS OWN SUCCESS.

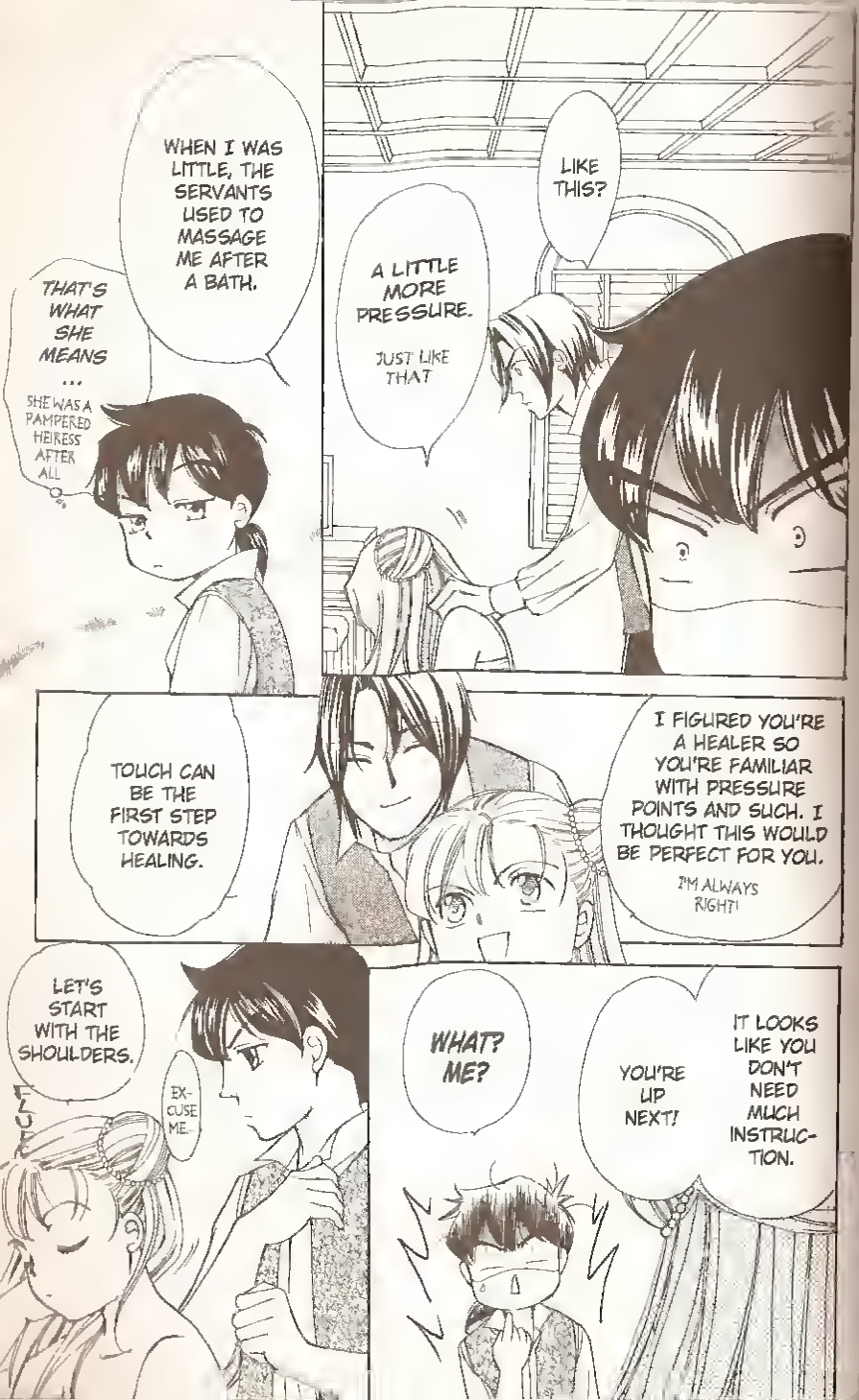

YOU ...!!
I CAN'T HANG AROUND SOMEONE LIKE YOU!
YOU'RE AWFUL!
YOU'RE NOT A DIAMOND!
SODA!
COME ON, LET'S LEAVE!
CLATTER
CLATTER
YOU LOST YOUR TEMPER AND WE LEFT, BUT...
...
YOU SAID WE'RE LEAVING, BUT WHERE ARE WE HEADED?
WE'RE COMPLETELY LOST.
WHINNY
CLATTER
CLATTER

YOU'RE WRONG! AS A FOOD TASTER AND AN APOTHECARY, YOU'VE RISKED YOUR LIFE.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE SURVIVED WITHOUT RESORTING TO EXTREME MEASURES.
I ALWAYS THOUGHT PROSTITUTES WERE MORE SHADY, BUT THEY'RE PRETTY STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, WANTING TO SURVIVE NO MATTER WHAT TAKES MORE COURAGE THAN NOT CARING ABOUT DEATH.
I FIGURED I WOULD NEVER HAVE WHAT I WANTED THE MOST, EVEN IF I LIVED...
THAT SOUNDS NICE, BUT I COULD HAVE CARED LESS ABOUT DYING BACK THEN. I WISHED FOR IT.
IT WOULD HAVE GIVEN ME PEACE.

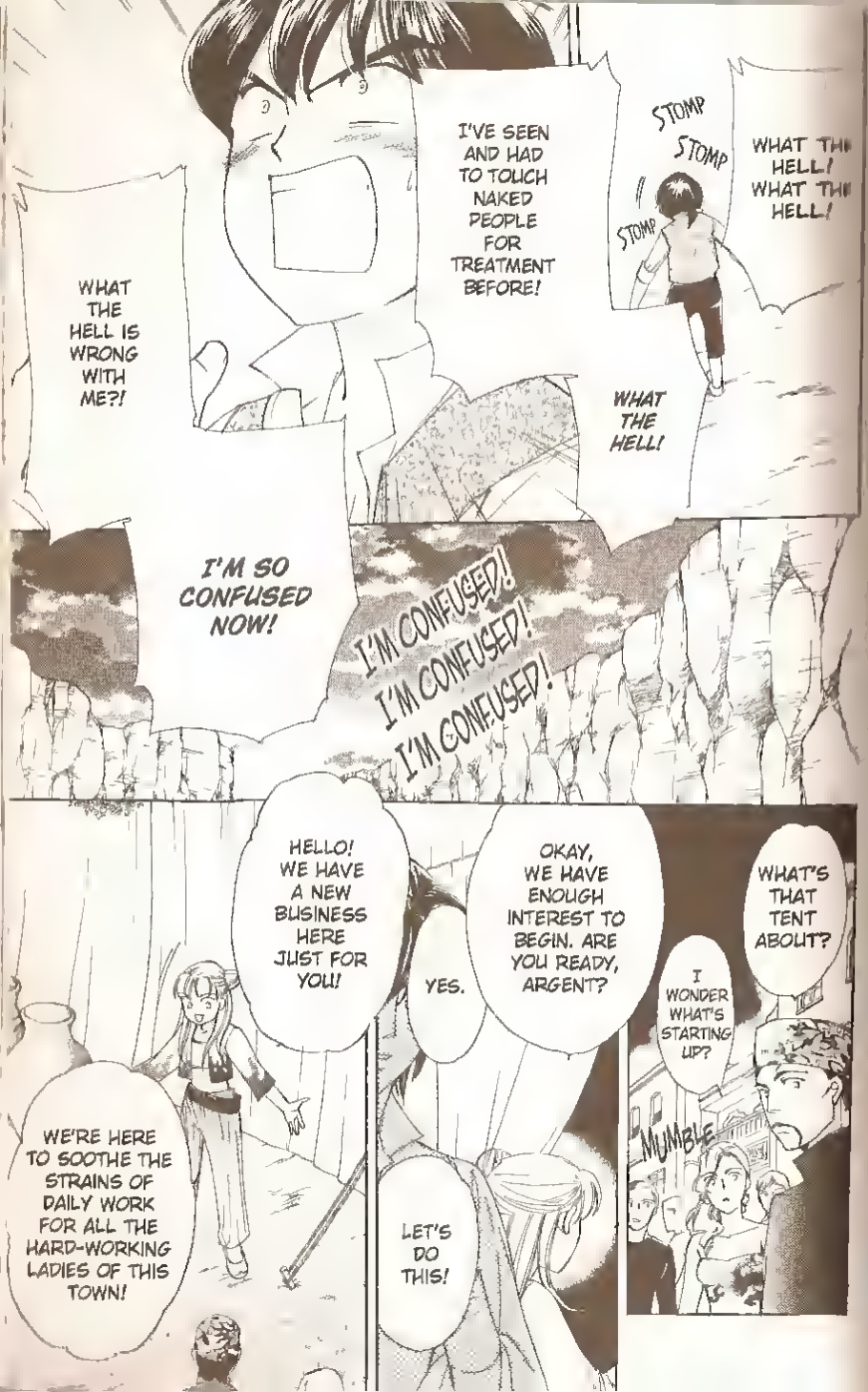
WHAT ABOUT AN AMUSING LINE? IF I LIKE IT, I'LL GIVE YOU FOOD IN EXCHANGE.
GOOD.
IF YOU'RE FOREIGNERS, CAN YOU TEACH ME A POPULAR SONG?
POPULAR SONG?
SORRY, WE'RE PENNILESS FOREIGNERS.
IF YOU NEED CUSTOMERS, YOU'RE BETTER OFF LOOKING ELSEWHERE.
"BEAUTY IS A CRIME!" OKAY, GOT IT.
FLUFF
SHIVER
"THIS IS THE BALLAD OF LOVE."
IF YOU MAKE MONEY, COME SEE ME! I'LL BE SURE TO SHOW YOU A GOOD TIME.
I TRY TO ATTRACT PEOPLE THROUGH CHATTING AND MY PERSONALITY INSTEAD.
I'M NOT THE PRETTIEST GIRL, SO I'M AT A DISADVAN-TAGE.
I THINK I CAN USE THAT.
FOR WHAT?

THE "SECRET TREASURE GALLERY" ISN'T JUST BAWDY ENTERTAINMENT.
PEOPLE TRAVEL FAR TO SEE THAT TOUCHING THOSE STONES ARE SUPPOSED TO HELP YOUR FERTILITY
SO HUMAN BEINGS ARE THE "FRUIT." CHILDREN ARE TREASURES, AND SEX IS CONSIDERED A SPIRITUAL ACT.
WE WORSHIP STONES THAT ARE SHAPED LIKE CERTAIN BODY PARTS BECAUSE OUR CULTURE STEMS FROM ROCKS. WE CAN'T FARM VERY MUCH HERE...
CULTURE SHOCK
I THINK I GET IT NOW...
I UNDERSTAND THE METHOD BEHIND THE MADNESS HERE IN CASTORIA NOW.
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
HE'S GOT A BIG MOUTH ...
OF COURSE NOT! I WON'T STEER YOU WRONG, I SWEAR.
ESPECIALLY MY MASTER. DON'T MAKE HIM DO ANYTHING THAT WILL PREVENT HIM FROM FACING THE PRINCESS.
WE HAVE LIMITS, THOUGH.


I FIGURED YOU'D GET LOST SO I'M HERE TO PICK YOU UP
YES, CITIZENS OF CASTORIA WILL DO ANYTHING FOR MONEY.
THEY ALSO GIVE 100% TO THEIR BUSINESS.
PROSTITUTES AND THIEVES ARE DOING THEIR BEST IN THEIR OWN WAY.
THEY'RE NOT DOING IT WITHOUT A GOAL IN MIND. SOME ARE TRYING TO EARN MONEY TO SET UP SHOP ON THEIR OWN.
OTHERS DEPEND ON THEIR BODY AND MIND TO BECOME THE "AMBASSADORS OF THE NIGHT." SOME HIGH CLASS COURTESANS MARRY WEALTHY AND POWERFUL MEN.
WE'RE A COUNTRY THAT DEPENDS ON ROCKS AND MINERALS. WE ALL POLISH AND CUT WHAT WE HAVE IN OUR OWN WAY.


WHEN I WAS LITTLE, THE SERVANTS USED TO MASSAGE ME AFTER A BATH.
THAT'S WHAT SHE MEANS ...
SHE WAS A PAMPERED HEIRESS AFTER ALL
LIKE THIS?
A LITTLE MORE PRESSURE.
JUST LIKE THAT
TOUCH CAN BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS HEALING.
I FIGURED YOU'RE A HEALER SO YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH PRESSURE POINTS AND SUCH. I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE PERFECT FOR YOU.
I'M ALWAYS RIGHT!
LET'S START WITH THE SHOULDERS.
EX-CUSE ME.
WHAT? ME?
YOU'RE UP NEXT!
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DON'T NEED MUCH INSTRUC-TION.

BELIEVE IN ME. WON'T YOU TRUST ME THIS TIME AROUND?
I'LL CUT AND POLISH YOU TO YOUR BENEFIT. YOU CAN BE THE KING OF THE HILL HERE, OR REMAIN A SERVANT. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.
WE'RE HERE, AND WE'RE NOT BACKING DOWN. WE'LL AIM FOR THE TOP!
I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU SOME NECESSARY TECHNIQUES.
BE PREPARED TO LEARN.
SLIP
WHAT KIND OF TECH-NIQUES?
STIMULATING CERTAIN PARTS OF THE BODY CAN BE VERY PLEASUR-ABLE.
LIKE HERE AND HERE.
WHAT IS SHE DOING?!
OH MY GOD ...


WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH ME?!
I'VE SEEN AND HAD TO TOUCH NAKED PEOPLE FOR TREATMENT BEFORE!
STOMP STOMP STOMP
WHAT THE HELL! WHAT THE HELL!
WHAT THE HELL!
I'M SO CONFUSED NOW!
I'M CONFUSED! I'M CONFUSED! I'M CONFUSED!
HELLO! WE HAVE A NEW BUSINESS HERE JUST FOR YOU!
WE'RE HERE TO SOOTHE THE STRAINS OF DAILY WORK FOR ALL THE HARD-WORKING LADIES OF THIS TOWN!
YES.
OKAY, WE HAVE ENOUGH INTEREST TO BEGIN. ARE YOU READY, ARGENT?
LET'S DO THIS!
WHAT'S THAT TENT ABOUT?
I WONDER WHAT'S STARTING UP?
MUMBLE

b'bmp
IT'S SNOW WHITE AND SMOOTH...
b'bmp b'bmp b'bmp
HER SKIN IS SO SOFT...
b'bmp b'bmp
I CAN'T DO THIS!
IT'S NOT FOR ME!
DASH
HUH?
HE WAS BLINDED BY THE DIAMOND OF CASTORIA.
POOR SODA. HE'S BEING CHALLENGED SO MUCH. . OH WELL...
YOU'RE A FINE MERCHANT!
THAT'S A GOOD ONE! YOU'RE GETTING GOOD AT SALES PITCHES!

WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO. HERE! TAKE THIS.
MY MASTER'S BECOMING BOLDER BY THE DAY...
I REALLY AM.
YOUR SHOULDERS ARE TENSE. YOU MUST BE WORKING HARD.
YOU CAN GIVE FOOT MASSAGES, RIGHT?
LIKE I SAID...
THEY MAY EVEN HELP YOU FIND THE STONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
YOU MAY BE ABLE TO FIND INFORMATION YOU NEED BY TALKING TO THEM.
YOU SEE, THEIR CLIENTS ARE GEM BROKERS AND MINERS.
LADIES, WHILE YOU WAIT, HAVE A FOOT BATH!
IT WILL WARM YOU UP!
COULD THAT BE WHY POPOLA...
...WANTED TO BRING US TO THIS VALLEY? TO HELP US?

Concept. Emperor of the Night
WE'RE A "RELAXATION CLINIC FOR WOMEN"! THIS IS POPOLA'S SPECIAL GALLERY OF MINERAL BATHS AND MORE!
HIS FIRM HANDS WILL SOOTHE THE STRAINS FROM YOUR BODY!
HE'S AN EMPEROR WHO SERVES OTHERS, BUT...

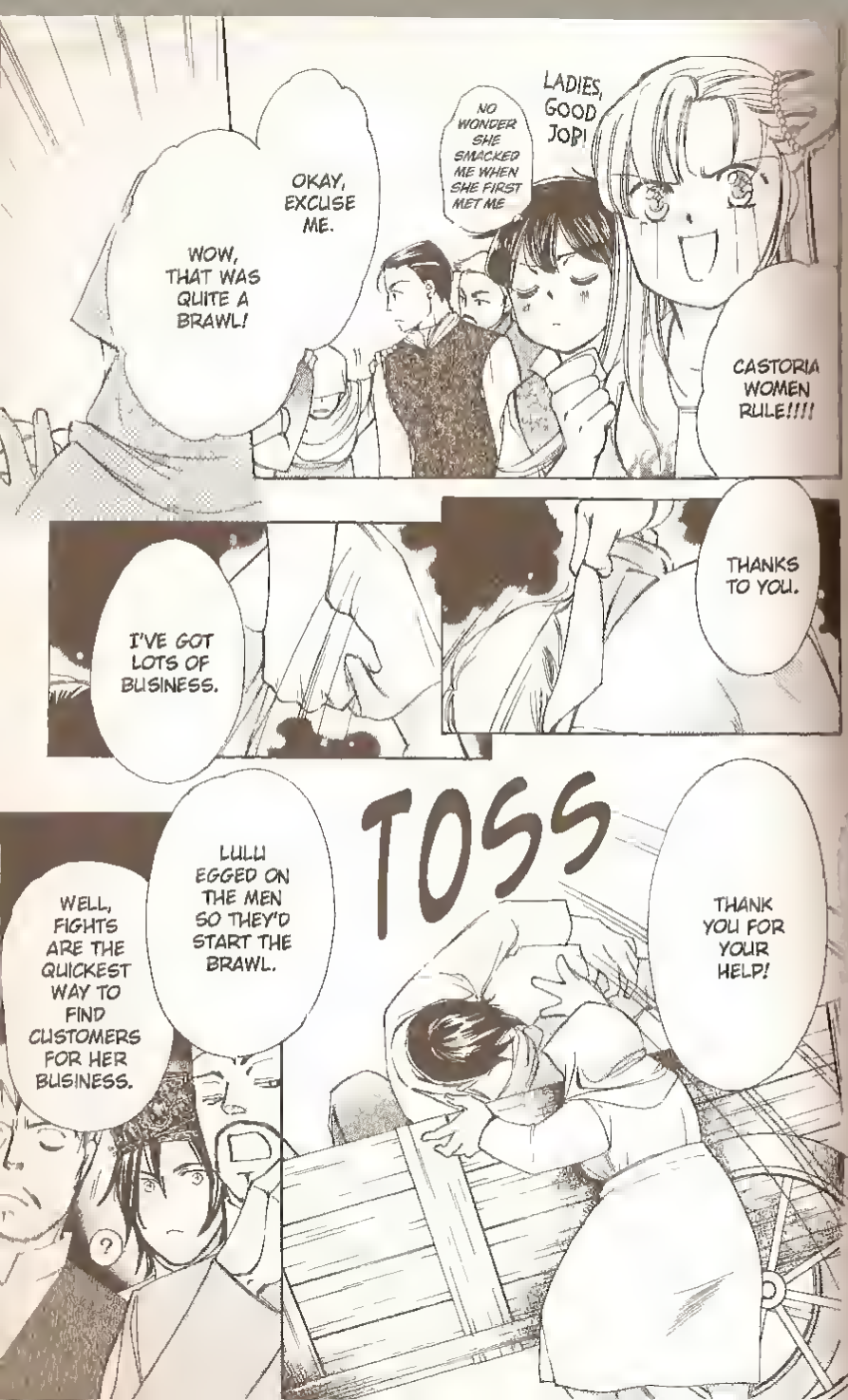
I CAN'T BELIEVE ALL THE GEMS I COLLECTED... THEY'RE NOTHING MORE THAN REGULAR ROCKS NOW, PRACTICALLY.
THE NEW CLIENTS ARE ALL SMALL-TIME, RUN OF THE MILL BROKERS.
THE CLIENTELE CHANGED AFTER THE MARKET RATE FOR GEMS FLUCTUATED. NOTHING WE CAN DO BUT DEAL.
...
A NEW GANG TOOK OVER AND STARTED A BUSINESS.
WHEN? WHAT HAPPENED?
THAT REMINDS ME!
ZETTON... COULD THAT BE...?
I THINK ZETTON FIXED THINGS FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT.
THEY GOT ELECTED UNDER THE SLOGAN OF "RELAXATION OF RULES HELPS BUSINESSES GROW."
WHAT'S GOING ON?
LOOKS LIKE IT WILL FEEL GOOD
FOOT PATH AND MASSAGE?
SPLASH
SPLASH
THINGS MIGHT GET BLOODY MIGHTY QUICK.
CRAP, THIS IS BAD! THAT'S LULU!
WHAT? SHE'S BACK FROM THE VALLEY?
I'LL SHOW THEM!
"RELAXATION CLINIC FOR WOMEN"? HOW DARE THEY SET UP SHOP WHILE I'VE BEEN GONE!
RECENT CLIENTS TRY TO GET OUT OF PAYING, COMPLAIN, AND DEMAND. I'M SICK OF IT!
I'M SO EXHAUSTED!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU CLOSED UP SHOP EARLY AND NOW YOU'RE GABBING IN HERE?
WE'VE BEEN SERVING YOU MEN ALL DAY!
WHAT WE DO AFTER WE CLOSE SHOP IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
THEN WHAT ABOUT HIM?
EXCUSE ME.
YOU LYING PIECES OF--
THIS IS A "RELAXATION CLINIC FOR WOMEN." WE DON'T ACCEPT MALE CUSTOMERS.
HE'S NOT A CLIENT.
WE'RE HIS CUSTOMERS!

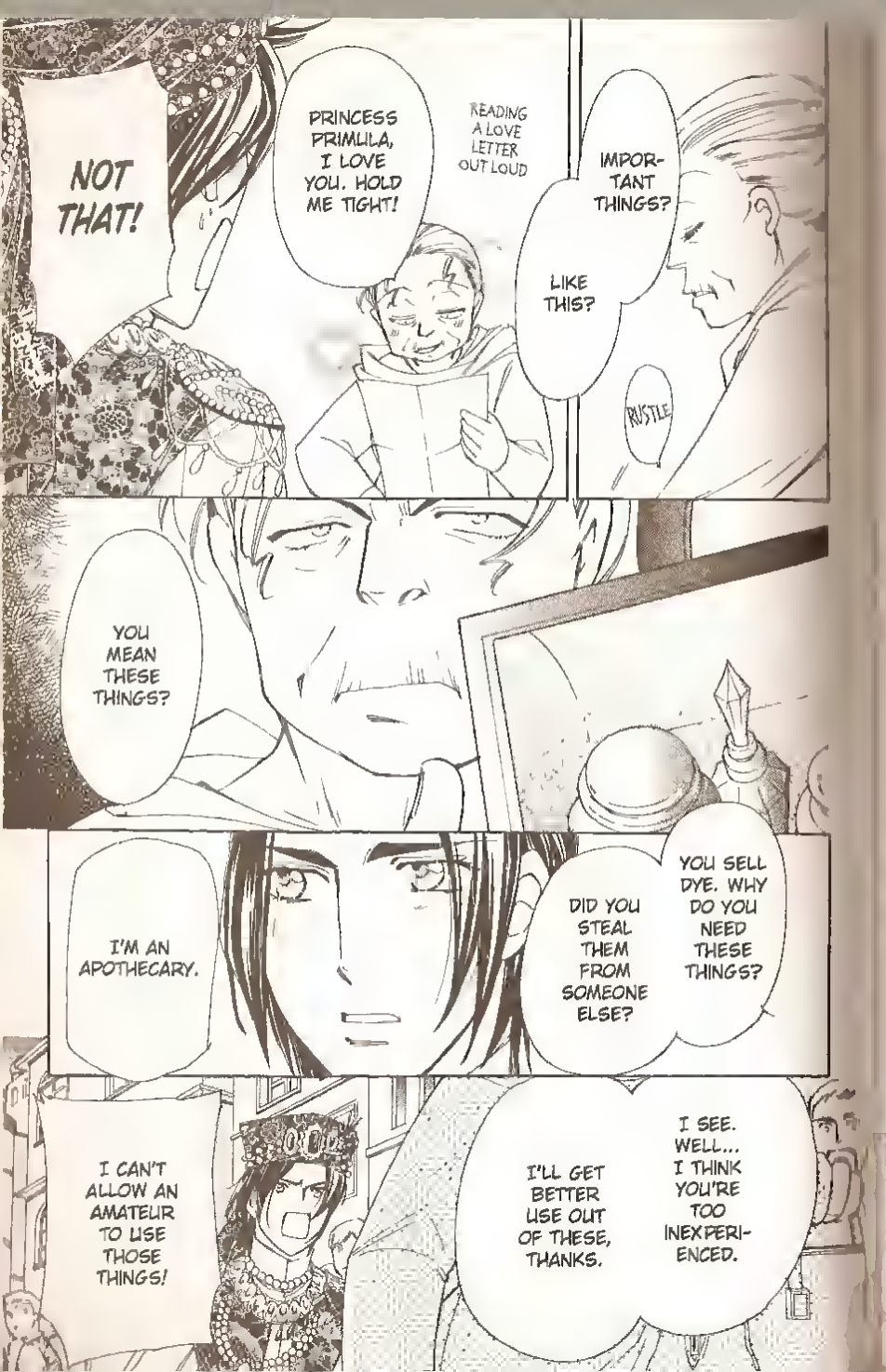
FOR EXAMPLE, STONES THAT COULD DETOXIFY A BASILISK'S BODY.
!
I HEARD THAT RARE STONES GET TRADED AROUND HERE.
WAIT A SECOND.
I HAVE NEVER SEEN ONE!
BASILISKS HAVEN'T BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME.
NEVER HEARD OF THAT!
DAMN WOMEN!
IF YOU KISS ME, I'LL TELL YOU.
I THINK I REMEMBER SOME-THING...
HM...
WHERE? TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW!

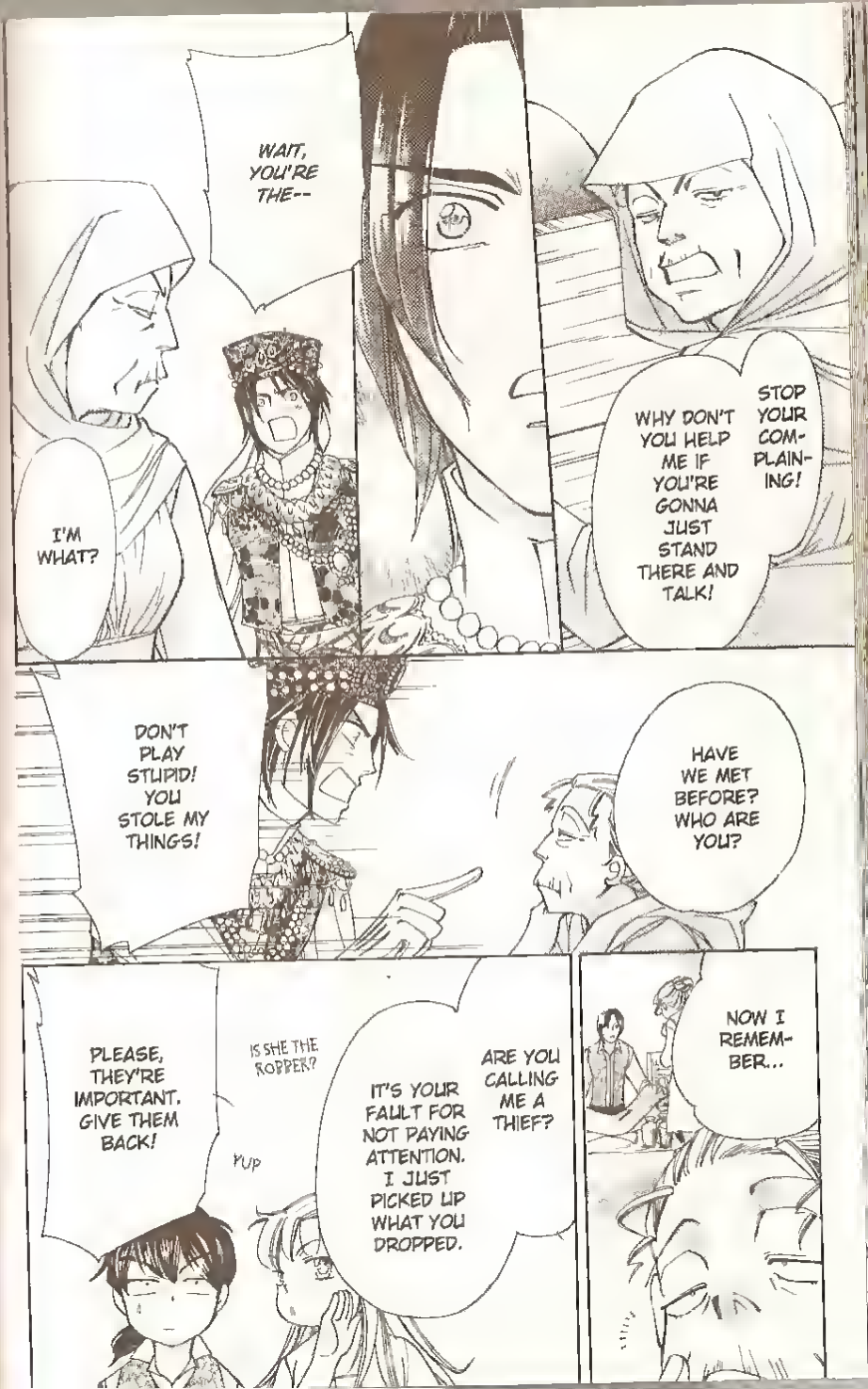
I HEARD SOMETHING!
UH, NOTHING WE SAID NOTHING.
I CALLED YOU DAMNED HAGS!
WHAT DID YOU CALL US?
I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DISRESPECT CASTORIA WOMEN!
I CAN'T TAKE THIS CRAP ANY LONGER!
KICK KICK KICK
CASTORIA WOMEN ARE STRONG ...
WOMEN DON'T HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS HERE FOR NOTHING.
OKAY, THERE'S NO STOPPING THE FIGHTING NOW. LET'S JUST HANG BACK UNTIL THINGS CALM DOWN AGAIN.
WE ALMOST GOT VALUABLE INFORMATION...

bash
YOU BRAT!
SHADDAP!
UNH!
SODA...
THAT REALLY HURT...
WE CLOSED SHOP BECAUSE YOU TRIED TO WIGGLE OUT OF PAYING THE FULL AMOUNT.
THEN WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY, YOU MAKE TROUBLE!
I KNEW IT.
SHUT UP, YOU DAMNED HAGS!
SAY WHAT ???
SEE, I CAN DO WHAT IT TAKES...


LADIES, GOOD JOB!
NO WONDER SHE SMACKED ME WHEN SHE FIRST MET ME
OKAY, EXCUSE ME.
WOW, THAT WAS QUITE A BRAWL!
CASTORIA WOMEN RULE!!!!
THANKS TO YOU.
I'VE GOT LOTS OF BUSINESS.
TOSS
LULU EGGED ON THE MEN SO THEY'D START THE BRAWL.
WELL, FIGHTS ARE THE QUICKEST WAY TO FIND CUSTOMERS FOR HER BUSINESS.
?
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

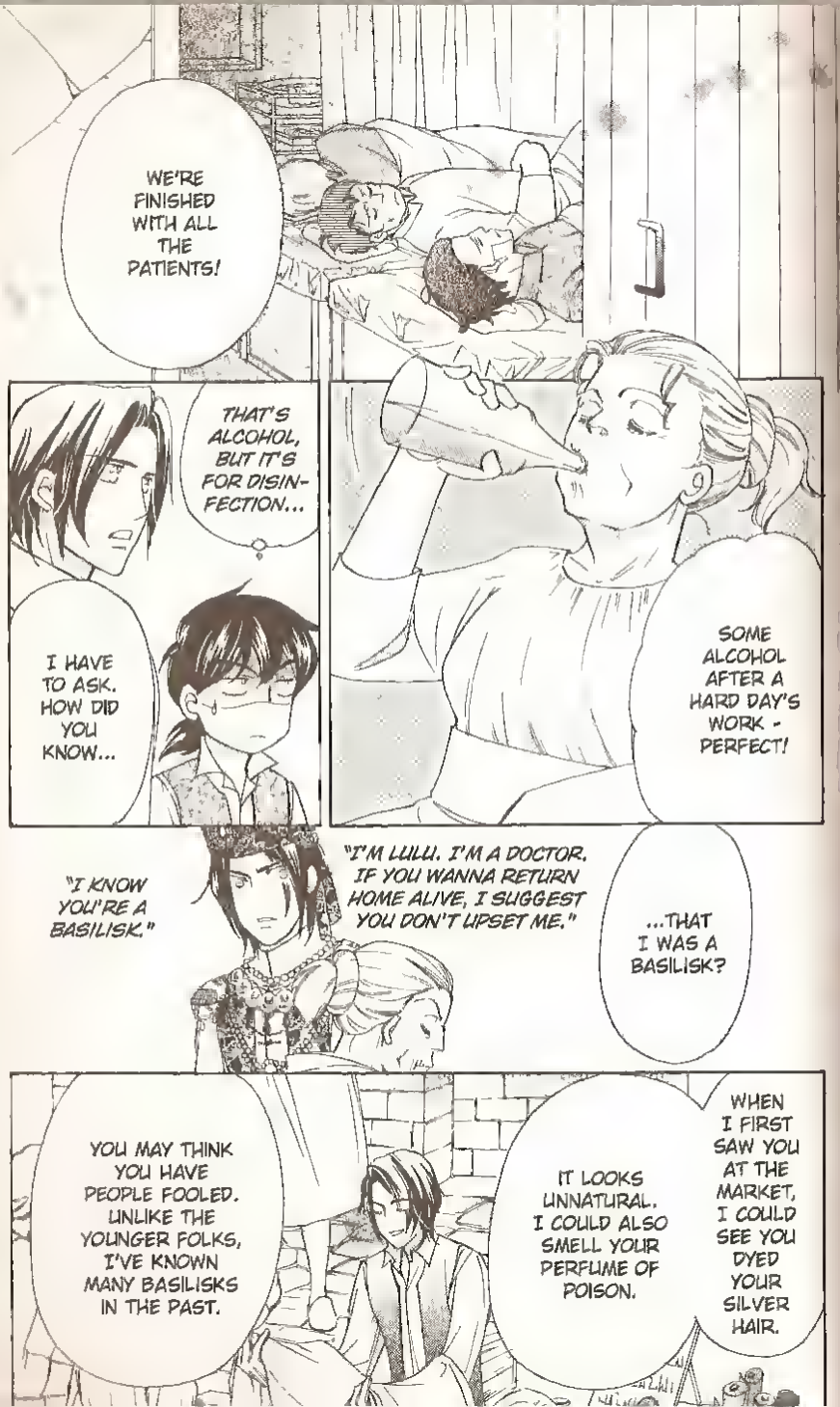
Welcome to Mino Valley
CRACK
THUD
STOMP
THANKS! WE FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW!
LET'S GO BACK HOME AND SLEEP.
NOW DON'T YOU DARE SHOW YOUR MUG AROUND HERE AGAIN!
YES MA'AM!
LOUDER!
YES MA'AM!
WOW!
I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MY SKIN.


NOT THAT!
PRINCESS PRIMLILA, I LOVE YOU. HOLD ME TIGHT!
READING A LOVE LETTER OUT LOUD
IMPOR-TANT THINGS?
LIKE THIS?
RUSTLE
YOU MEAN THESE THINGS?
I'M AN APOTHECARY.
DID YOU STEAL THEM FROM SOMEONE ELSE?
YOU SELL DYE. WHY DO YOU NEED THESE THINGS?
I CAN'T ALLOW AN AMATEUR TO USE THOSE THINGS!
I'LL GET BETTER USE OUT OF THESE, THANKS.
I SEE. WELL... I THINK YOU'RE TOO INEXPERI-ENCED.


WAIT, YOU'RE THE--
I'M WHAT?
WHY DON'T YOU HELP ME IF YOU'RE GONNA JUST STAND THERE AND TALK!
STOP YOUR COM-PLAIN-ING!
DON'T PLAY STUPID! YOU STOLE MY THINGS!
HAVE WE MET BEFORE? WHO ARE YOU?
PLEASE, THEY'RE IMPORTANT. GIVE THEM BACK!
IS SHE THE ROBBER?
YUP
IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR NOT PAYING ATTENTION. I JUST PICKED UP WHAT YOU DROPPED.
ARE YOU CALLING ME A THIEF?
NOW I REMEM-BER...

ALL RIGHT, LOTS OF CUSTOMERS FOR A CHANGE!
Mino Valley, Castoria
Dr. Lulu's cottage
GWAAAAAHHHH
I'LL START DISHING OUT THE PAIN WITH YOU.
WHY ARE WE TAKING ORDERS FROM THAT WITCH?
SHADDAP! IF YOU WANT ME TO KEEP MY TRAP SHUT, DO AS I SAY!
FOR THIS? WASTE OF GOOD MEDICINE. IF YOU'RE AN APOTHECARY, WHY DON'T YOU HELP ME DISINFECT?
STITCH
STITCH
UHHH
IF YOU'RE A DOCTOR, YOU SHOULD USE SOME TYPE OF ANESTHETIC.
KEEP HER TRAP SHUT?
SHE FIGURED OUT I WAS A BASILISK SOMEHOW.
IN CASTORIA, BASILISKS ARE TABOO. I'D FOLLOW HER ORDERS.

YOU CALL ME AN AMATEUR? HOW DARE YOU! YOU'RE JUST AN APOTHECARY.
I KNOW YOU'RE A BASILISK.
IF YOU WANNA RETURN HOME ALIVE, I SUGGEST YOU DON'T UPSET ME.
I'M LULU. I'M A DOCTOR.

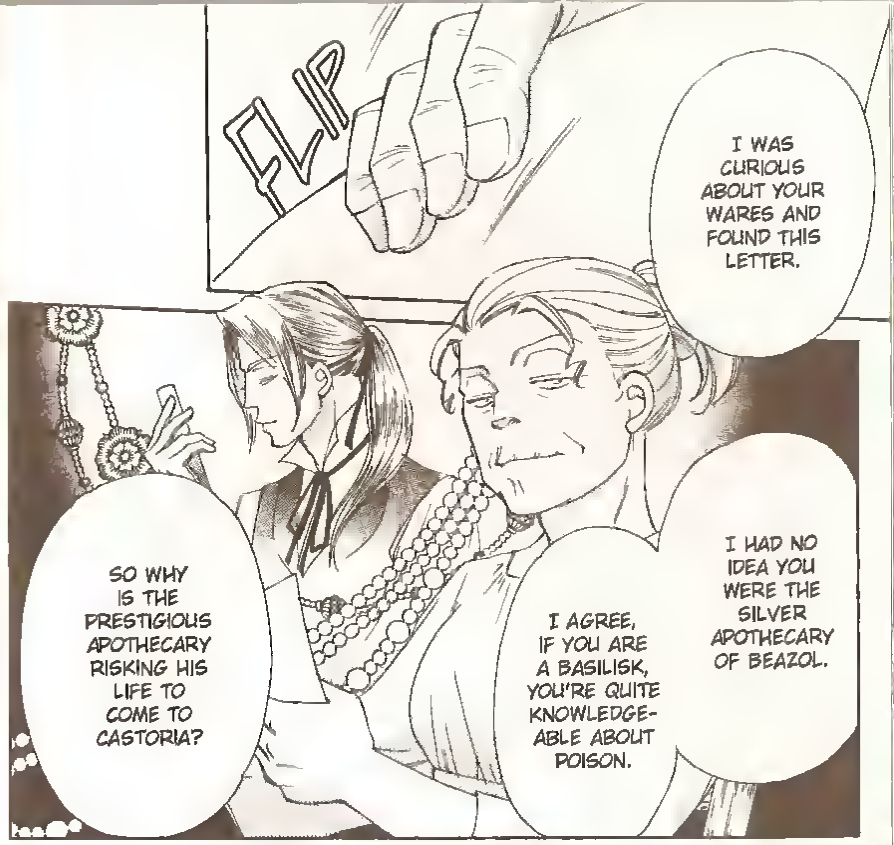

WE'RE FINISHED WITH ALL THE PATIENTS!
THAT'S ALCOHOL, BUT IT'S FOR DISIN-FECTION...
I HAVE TO ASK. HOW DID YOU KNOW...
SOME ALCOHOL AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK - PERFECT!
"I KNOW YOU'RE A BASILISK."
"I'M LULU. I'M A DOCTOR. IF YOU WANNA RETURN HOME ALIVE, I SUGGEST YOU DON'T UPSET ME."
...THAT I WAS A BASILISK?
YOU MAY THINK YOU HAVE PEOPLE FOOLED. UNLIKE THE YOUNGER FOLKS, I'VE KNOWN MANY BASILISKS IN THE PAST.
IT LOOKS UNNATURAL. I COULD ALSO SMELL YOUR PERFUME OF POISON.
WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU AT THE MARKET, I COULD SEE YOU DYED YOUR SILVER HAIR.

Popola, the daughter of a former diamond mine owner. Currently runs a hot spring
CASTORIA IS A COUNTRY SITUATED IN THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE CONTINENT. THEIR MAIN INDUSTRY IS GEM AND MINERAL MINING, AND THE COUNTRY IS FILLED WITH MERCHANTS. AS A RESULT, CASTORIA IS LIKE A HUGE GUILD.
Prostitute, has a hard time attracting customers
CASTORIA HAS NO KINGS OR ARISTOCRATS. THEIR LAWS ARE DETERMINED BY A CANDIDATE ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE.
Mysterious doctor, Lulu
Argent, former Royal Apothecary in Beazol
Soda, apothecary apprentice
Apothecaries
CASTORIA USED TO USE BASILISKS FOR LABOR IN DANGEROUS MINING CONDITIONS. HOWEVER, BASILISKS WERE EXECUTED EN MASSE FOR SOME REASON SOME TIME AGO.

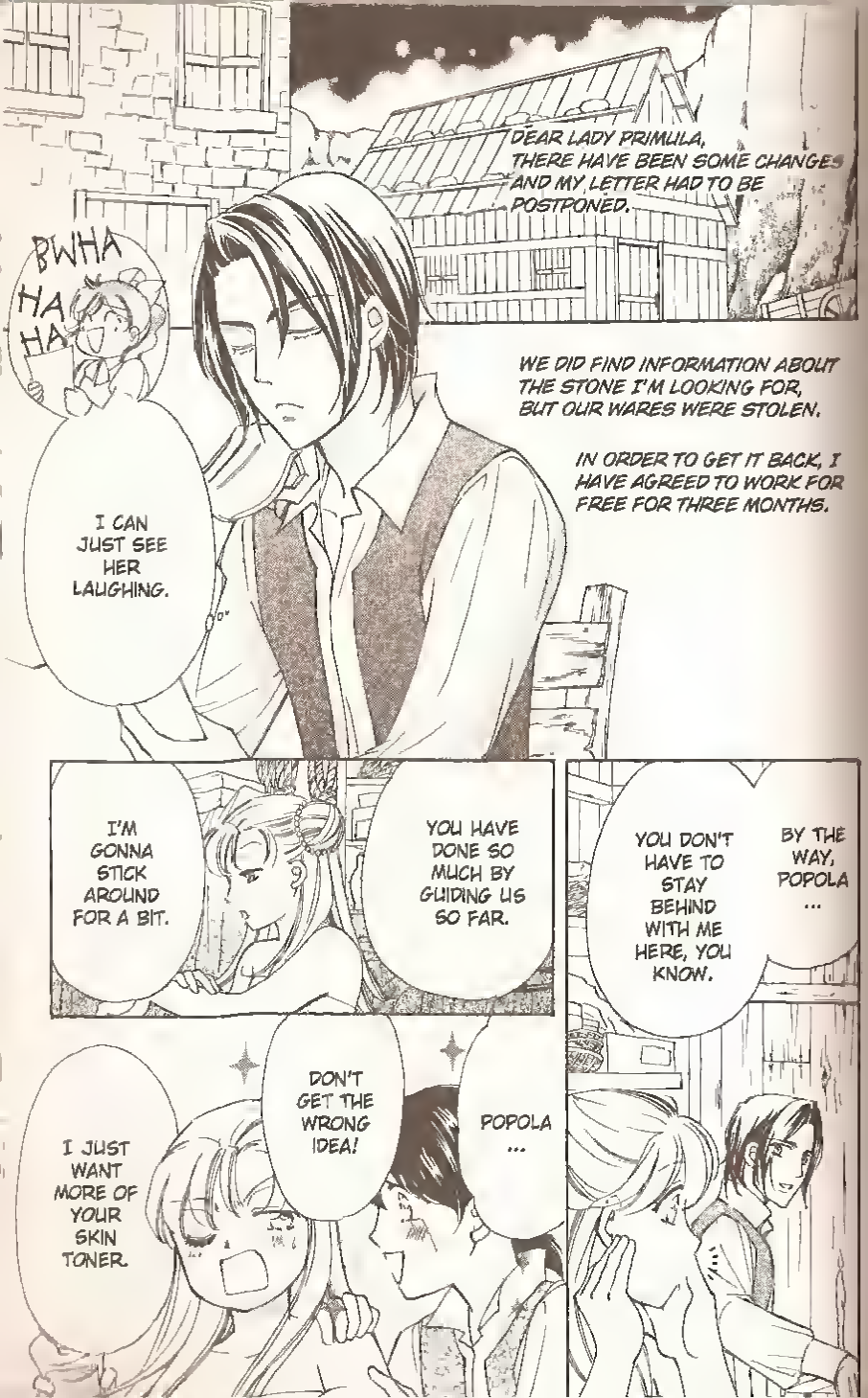
I REQUIRE 5,000,000 LIRS FOR THAT INFORMA-TION.

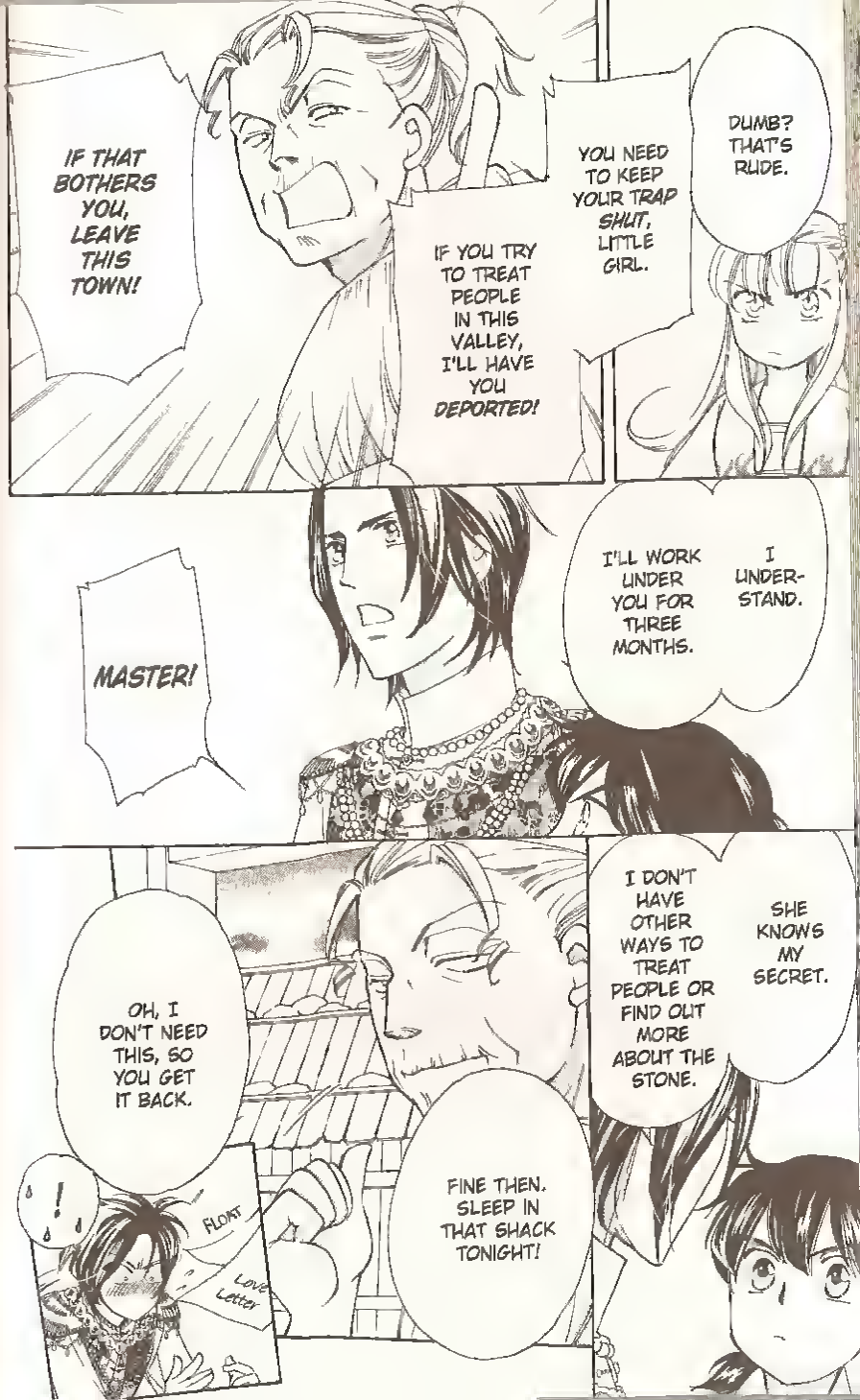
FINE, I'LL GIVE YOU A STEEP DISCOUNT.
MASTER, WE SHOULD GO.
SHE'S PROBABLY LYING.
THAT'S A BIT MUCH.

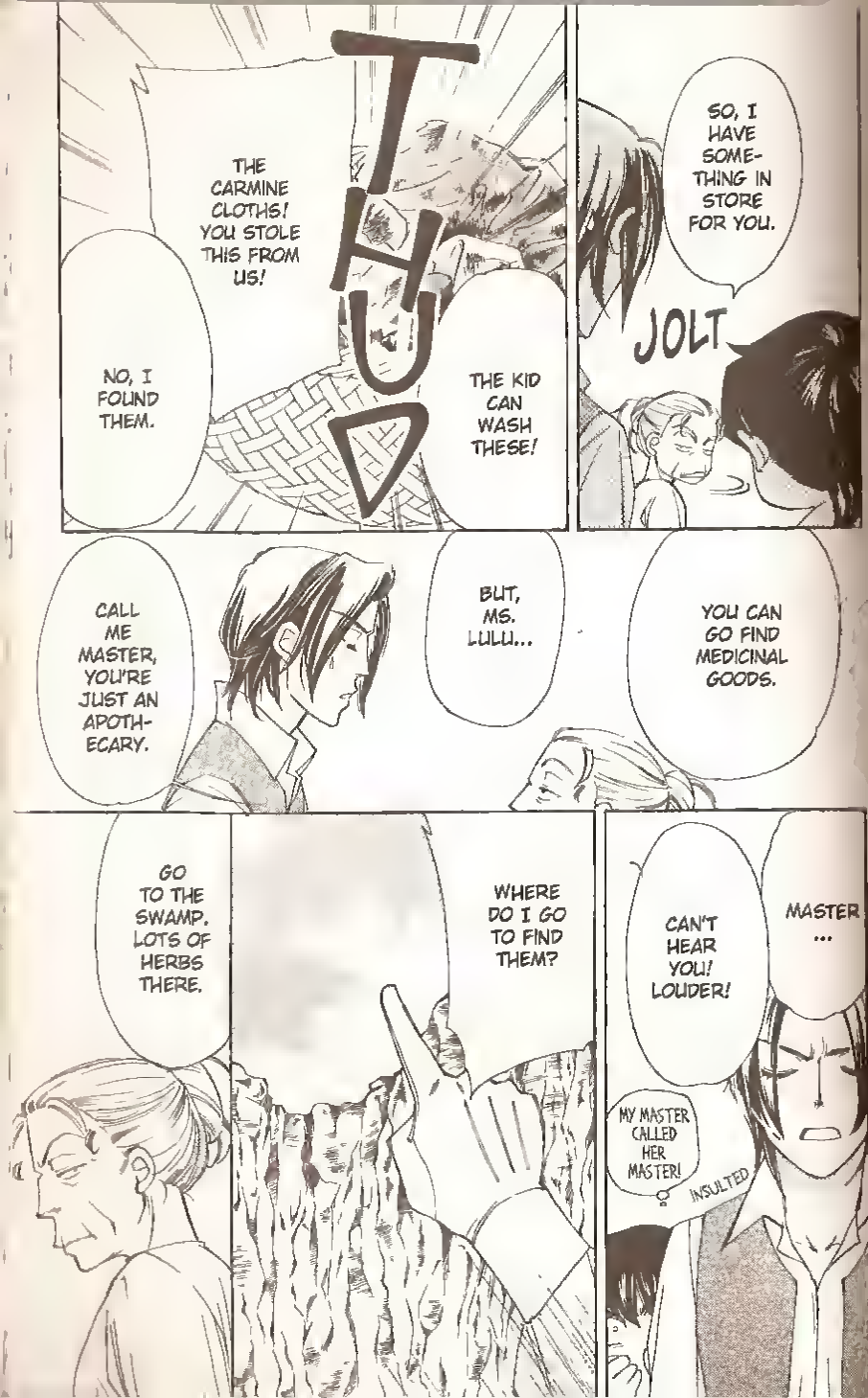
I HAVEN'T MET AN APOTHECARY THAT WAS COMPETENT ENOUGH FOR MY STANDARDS.
MY ASSISTANT QUIT, SO I'VE BEEN HAVING A TOUGH TIME.
IT'S A LOT BETTER THAN RUNNING SOME DUMB WOMEN'S RELAXATION CLINIC!
I'LL RETURN YOUR WARES.
WHY DON'T YOU APPRENTICE UNDER ME FOR FREE FOR THREE MONTHS.

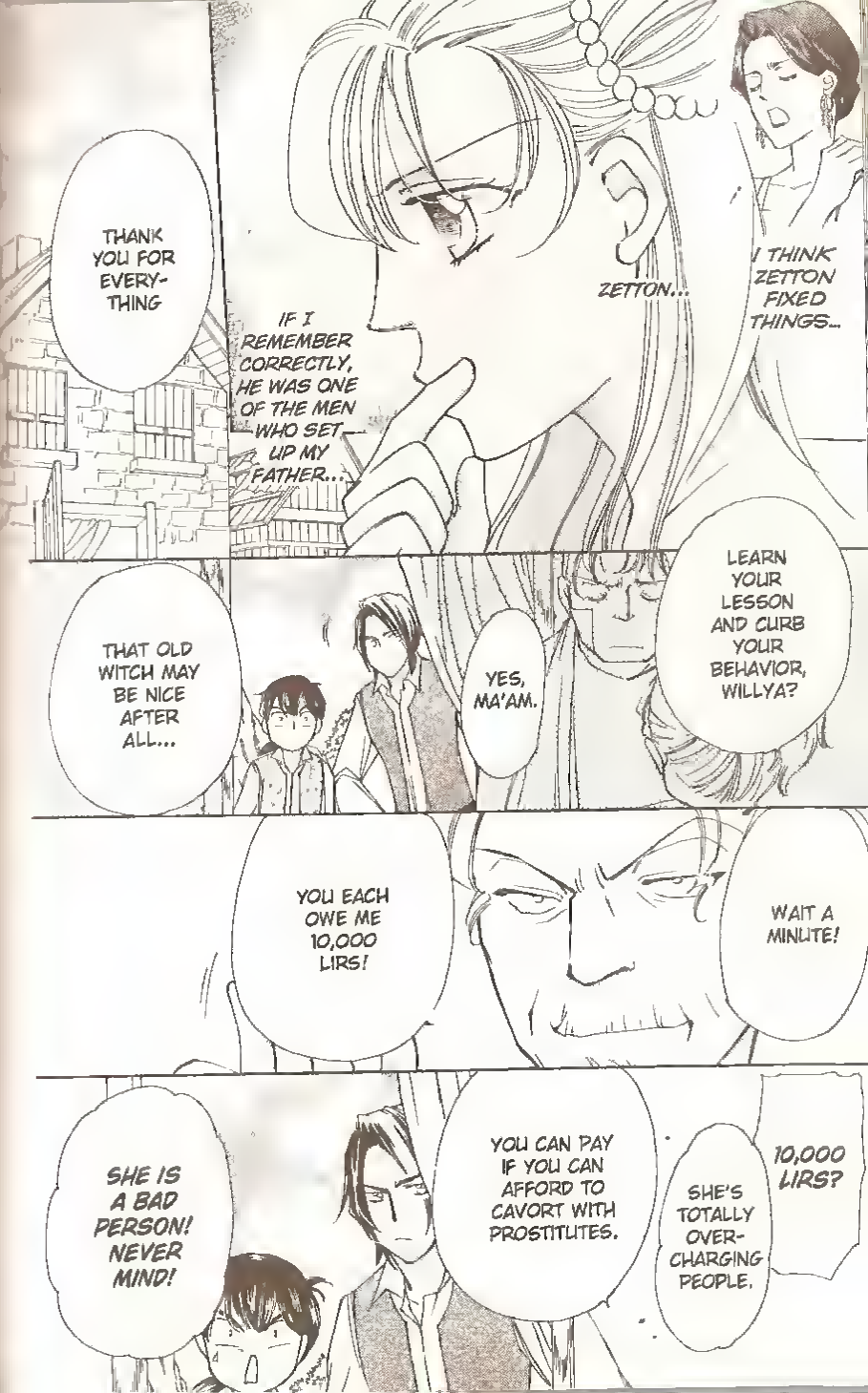

FLIP
I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR WARES AND FOUND THIS LETTER.
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE THE SILVER APOTHECARY OF BEAZOL.
I AGREE, IF YOU ARE A BASILISK, YOU'RE QUITE KNOWLEDGE-ABLE ABOUT POISON.
SO WHY IS THE PRESTIGIOUS APOTHECARY RISKING HIS LIFE TO COME TO CASTORIA?

WHERE IS IT?
YES, THERE IS SUCH A THING. I'VE EVEN TOUCHED IT BEFORE.
NOW I GET IT.
I HEARD THERE WAS A STONE THAT COULD DETOXIFY ME.


DEAR LADY PRIMULA, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES AND MY LETTER HAD TO BE POSTPONED.
BWHA HA HA
WE DID FIND INFORMATION ABOUT THE STONE I'M LOOKING FOR, BUT OUR WARES WERE STOLEN.
IN ORDER TO GET IT BACK, I HAVE AGREED TO WORK FOR FREE FOR THREE MONTHS.
I CAN JUST SEE HER LAUGHING.
I'M GONNA STICK AROUND FOR A BIT.
YOU HAVE DONE SO MUCH BY GUIDING US SO FAR.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY BEHIND WITH ME HERE, YOU KNOW.
BY THE WAY, POPOLA ...
I JUST WANT MORE OF YOUR SKIN TONER.
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA!
POPOLA ...


IF THAT BOTHERS YOU, LEAVE THIS TOWN!
IF YOU TRY TO TREAT PEOPLE IN THIS VALLEY, I'LL HAVE YOU DEPORTED!
YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR TRAP SHUT, LITTLE GIRL.
DUMB? THAT'S RUDE.
MASTER!
I'LL WORK UNDER YOU FOR THREE MONTHS.
I UNDER-STAND.
OH, I DON'T NEED THIS, SO YOU GET IT BACK.
FINE THEN. SLEEP IN THAT SHACK TONIGHT!
I DON'T HAVE OTHER WAYS TO TREAT PEOPLE OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STONE.
SHE KNOWS MY SECRET.
!
FLOAT
Love Letter


THUD
THE CARMINE CLOTHS! YOU STOLE THIS FROM US!
NO, I FOUND THEM.
THE KID CAN WASH THESE!
SO, I HAVE SOME-THING IN STORE FOR YOU.
JOLT
CALL ME MASTER, YOU'RE JUST AN APOTH-ECARY.
BUT, MS. LULU...
YOU CAN GO FIND MEDICINAL GOODS.
GO TO THE SWAMP. LOTS OF HERBS THERE.
WHERE DO I GO TO FIND THEM?
CAN'T HEAR YOU! LOUDER!
MASTER ...
MY MASTER CALLED HER MASTER!
INSULTED

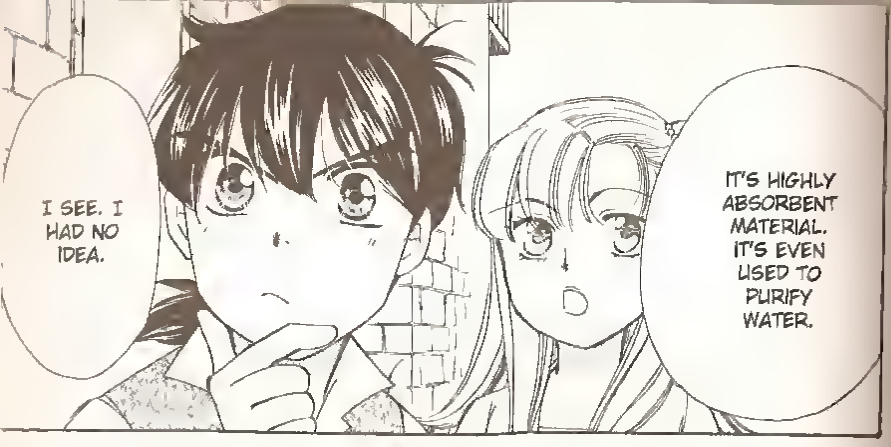

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, HE WAS ONE OF THE MEN WHO SET UP MY FATHER...
ZETTON...
I THINK ZETTON FIXED THINGS...
THAT OLD WITCH MAY BE NICE AFTER ALL...
YES, MA'AM.
LEARN YOUR LESSON AND CURB YOUR BEHAVIOR, WILLYA?
YOU EACH OWE ME 10,000 LIRS!
WAIT A MINUTE!
SHE IS A BAD PERSON! NEVER MIND!
YOU CAN PAY IF YOU CAN AFFORD TO CAVORT WITH PROSTITUTES.
SHE'S TOTALLY OVER-CHARGING PEOPLE.
10,000 LIRS?

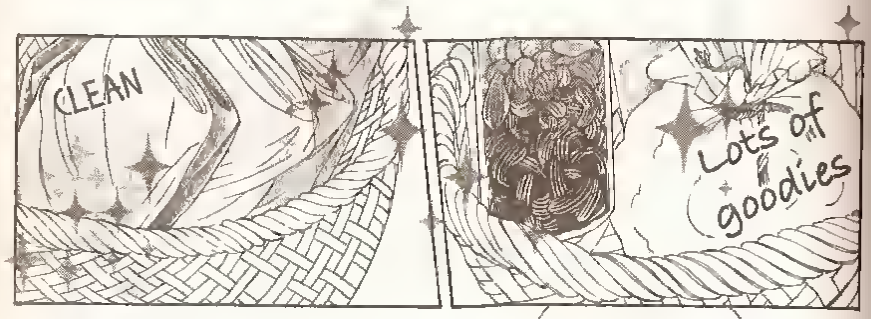
POPOLA...
JUST BECAUSE I'M STICKING AROUND DOESN'T MEAN I'M HELPING YOU.
I HAVE NO SOAP! YOU'RE BEING UNREASON-ABLE!
THIS ISN'T VERY CLEAN YET!
I'M NOT USED TO CATCHING FROGS.
ARGENT, THIS WAS ALL YOU COULD FIND?
YOU'RE ALL BRAINS! THAT DOESN'T HELP ME ONE BIT!
SIGH
YOU'RE A USELESS LABORER.

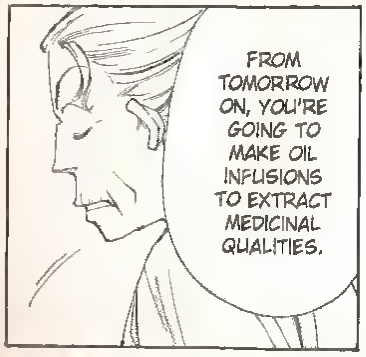
CRO AK
I THINK!
THEY USE FROGS AND LEECHES AS MEDICINE...
I SEE.
THAT'S ROUGH! I HOPE YOU DO WELL!
I HEARD YOU'RE WORKING UNDER LULU.
EMPEROR OF THE NIGHT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M GOING TO DO SOME RESEARCH AND ADVERTISE MY HOT SPRINGS.
POPOLA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WE CAN'T SELL THEM NOW!
SPLASH
SPLASH
THIS IS EXPENSIVE FABRIC! SHE GOT THEM SO DIRTY!

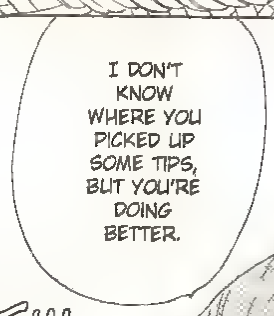
DON'T COMPARE US TO SOMEONE LIKE THAT! GAH!!!
SOMETIMES, IT COULD BE SNOT OR ANIMAL FECES.
SOME JUST TAKE RANDOM GRASS, ROLL IT UP INTO A PILL, AND CALL IT MEDICINE.
DAMMIT, WE'LL SHOW THEM ONE DAY!
DEAR PRINCESS, BEAZOL AND EVEN NAVARA, AS UNSTABLE AS THEY ARE, SEEM LIKE PARADISE NOW.
HIDE
OKAY, NOBODY'S LOOKING!
I THINK IT WAS AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE.
PHEW.
I NEVER IMAGINED, THE ENVIRONMENT AND STANDARDS WOULD BE SO DIFFERENT HERE.

APOTH-ECARIES CAN PERFORM SIMPLE SURGERIES
I AGREE THAT EVEN IN BEAZOL, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DOCTOR AND AN APOTHECARY COULD BE A BIT BLURRY.
THE PATIENT CHOOSES WHO THEY WANT TO SEE...
DOCTORS CAN COM-POUND MEDICINE
SHE KEEPS TELLING US WE'RE USELESS. SHE'S INSULTING OUR PROFESSION!
DAMMIT!
APOTHECARIES ARE "NEW BUSINESS" HERE.
THERE'S A LONGER HISTORY OF DOCTORS USING TOOLS RATHER THAN MEDICINE TO HEAL PEOPLE.
WELL, CASTORIA IS BLESSED IN GEMS AND MINERALS, BUT HERBS AREN'T VERY COMMON HERE.
UNLIKE GEMS, YOU CAN'T TELL IF IT'S GENUINE OR HIGH QUALITY UNLESS YOU INGEST IT.
THERE ARE LOTS OF FRAUDU-LENT APOTH-ECARIES.
APOTHECAR-IES WERE UNSKILLED SNAKE OIL SALESMEN.
SO THEY TOLD ME WHEN WE WERE TRYING TO GET IN.

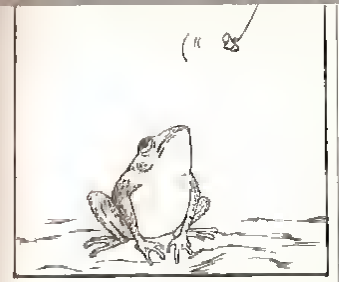

I SEE. I HAD NO IDEA.
IT'S HIGHLY ABSORBENT MATERIAL. IT'S EVEN USED TO PURIFY WATER.

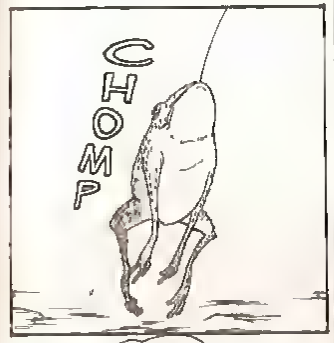

CLEAN
Lots of goodies

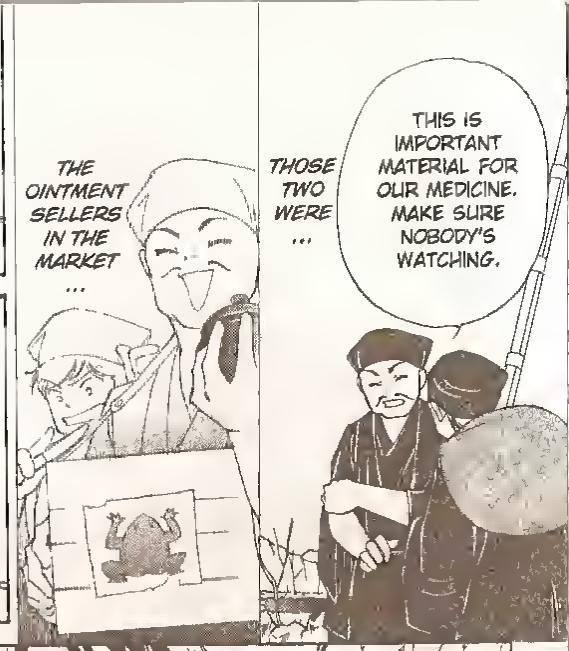

FROM TOMORROW ON, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE OIL INFUSIONS TO EXTRACT MEDICINAL QUALITIES.

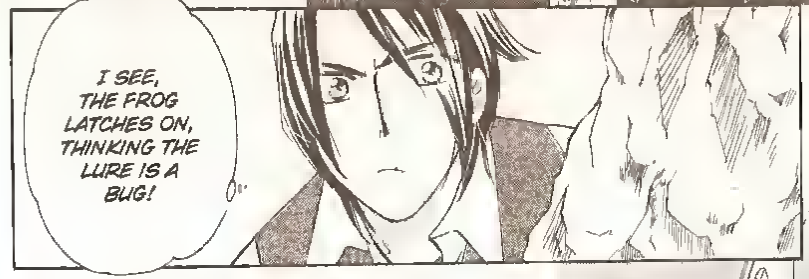

I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU PICKED UP SOME TIPS, BUT YOU'RE DOING BETTER.

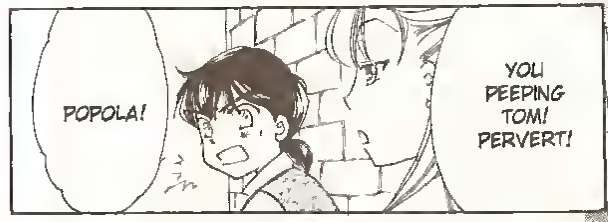
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S STARTING TO RESPECT US AS APOTHECARIES NOW.
PHEW

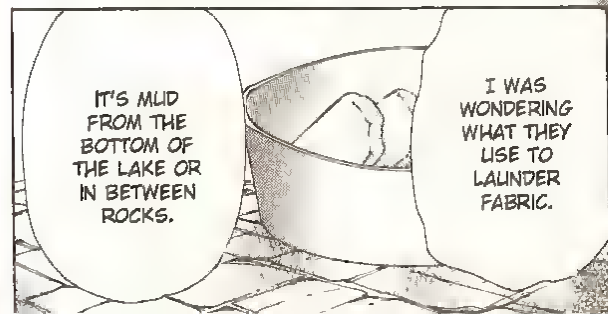


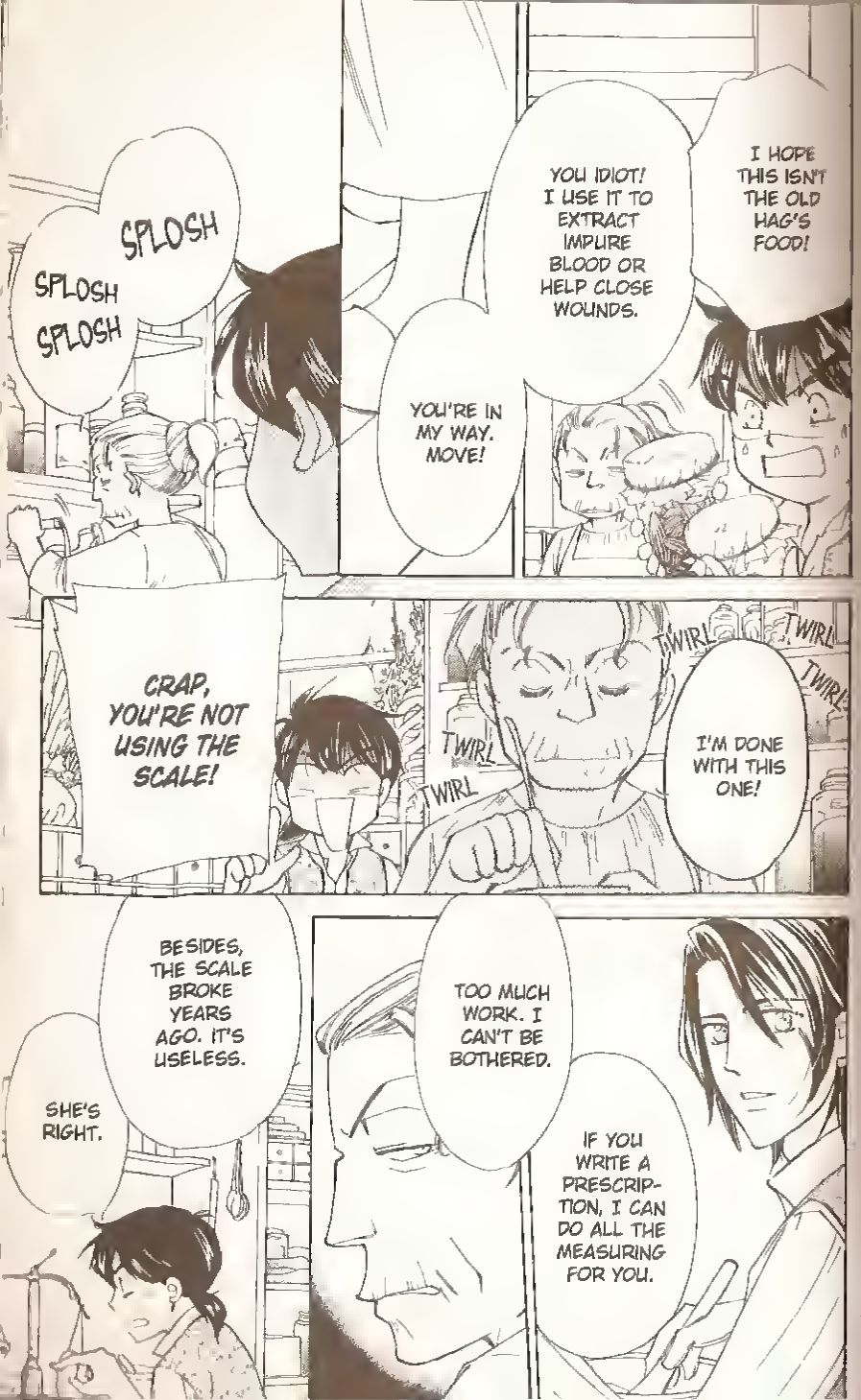

CHOMP


THE OINTMENT SELLERS IN THE MARKET ...
THOSE TWO WERE ...
THIS IS IMPORTANT MATERIAL FOR OUR MEDICINE. MAKE SURE NOBODY'S WATCHING.


I SEE, THE FROG LATCHES ON, THINKING THE LURE IS A BUG!


POPOLA!
YOU PEEPING TOM! PERVERT!


IT'S MUD FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE OR IN BETWEEN ROCKS.
I WAS WONDERING WHAT THEY USE TO LAUNDER FABRIC.

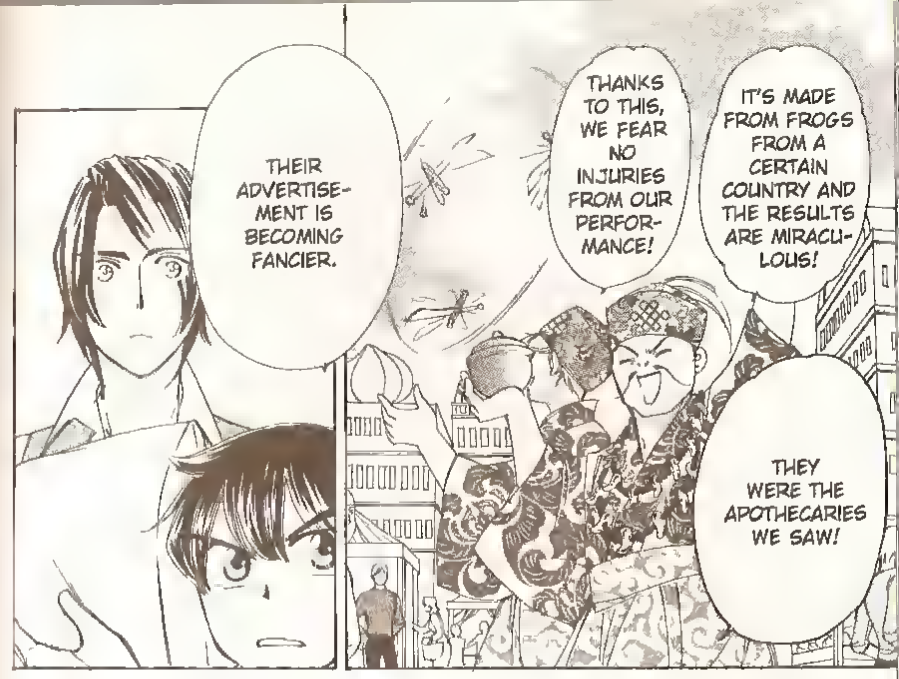

SPLOSH
SPLOSH
SPLOSH
I HOPE THIS ISN'T THE OLD HAG'S FOOD!
YOU IDIOT! I USE IT TO EXTRACT IMPURE BLOOD OR HELP CLOSE WOUNDS.
YOU'RE IN MY WAY. MOVE!
CRAP, YOU'RE NOT USING THE SCALE!
TWIRL
TWIRL
TWIRL
TWIRL
I'M DONE WITH THIS ONE!
BESIDES, THE SCALE BROKE YEARS AGO. IT'S USELESS.
SHE'S RIGHT.
TOO MUCH WORK. I CAN'T BE BOTHERED.
IF YOU WRITE A PRESCRIPTION, I CAN DO ALL THE MEASURING FOR YOU.

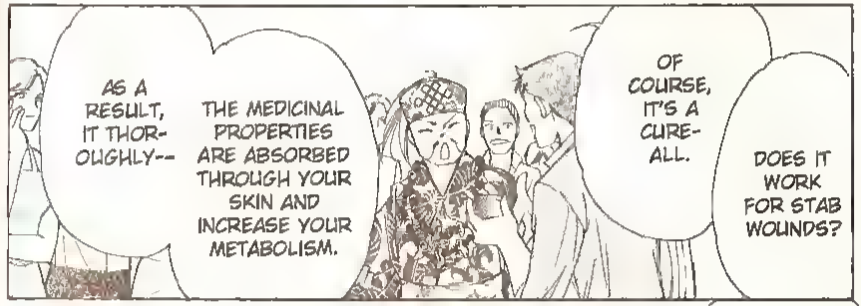
...
YOU BASILISKS ARE SO USEFUL IN THAT REGARD.
IT'S HARD WORK TO HANDLE POISONOUS MATERIAL TO MAKE MEDICINE.
POKE
POKE
POPOLA, YOU DID SOME RESEARCH ON THAT WITCH!
WHEN HER WALLET GETS THIN, SHE INCITES A RIOT TO BRING MORE PATIENTS TO HER BUSINESS.
AS A RESULT, SHE CAN'T PURCHASE FABRIC OR MEDICINE.
ACCORDING TO PEOPLE IN THIS VALLEY, LULU'S APPARENTLY A SKILLED DOCTOR. HOWEVER, BOTH THE DOCTOR'S GUILD AND PEOPLE DON'T CARE FOR HER.
SORT OF.
I HAD TO DO IT
WHAT DO YOU USE LEECHES AND ANTS FOR, ANYWAY?
SHE'S GOT MOLDY RYE, MOLDY FRUIT, AND OLD ALCOHOL.
NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY SHE DOESN'T HAVE MEDICINE.

I ADMIT LULU IS RUDE AND BARBARIC, BUT IT SEEMS SHE IS A SKILLED AND INGENIOUS DOCTOR.
I WON'T DIE FROM A SMALL AMOUNT OF TOXIN
I BELIEVE HER ECCENTRICITY CAUSES MISUNDERSTANDINGS.
I THINK I'LL BE A GUINEA PIG AND TEST THE EFFECTS OF THE DRUGS ON MYSELF.
IT REMINDS ME OF MYSELF EARLIER IN BEAZOL, SO I FEEL EMPATHETIC...
LOOK, MASTER!
EVERYONE GATHER 'ROUND!
SODA ...
THAT WITCH IS MAKING US GO SHOPPING? WE SHOULD JUST RUN OFF RIGHT NOW.

SLAM
DON'T ENTER MY TREATMENT ROOM UNLESS I ORDER YOU!
DON'T GET A BIG HEAD BECAUSE YOU HELPED ME ONCE!
THEN MAYBE I CAN HELP WITH THE TREATMENT LIKE BEFORE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE STILL HAS PATIENTS.
I WONDER WHAT THIS LIQUID IS. IT MAKES ME DIZZY.
LEECHES ARE PERFECT FOR DRAINING BLOOD FROM DIFFICULT AREAS. ANTS HAVE POWERFUL BITES THAT CAN BE USED AS SUTURES.
I SEE...

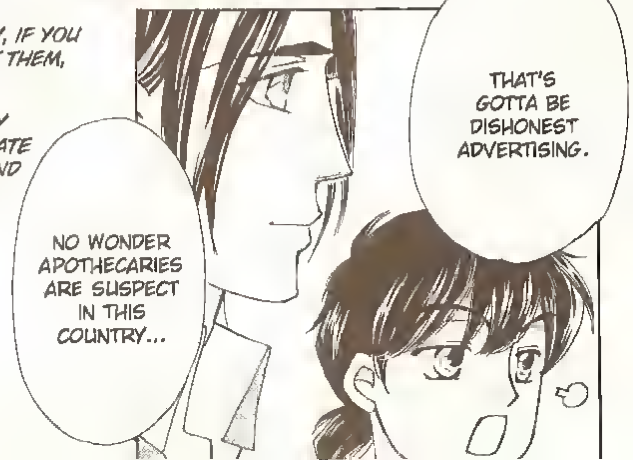
I BELIEVE ONE DAY, DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES CAN FIND COMMON GROUND. AFTER ALL, BOTH PROFESSIONS ARE ABOUT HEALING PEOPLE.
WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT ZETTON?
Foot Bath
20 Lirs
NO NEW INFORMATION TODAY...
THE FOOT BATH WAS RELAXING. THANK YOU.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS.
I SEE.
UNFORTUNATELY, I DON'T KNOW MANY DETAILS ABOUT THE MAN.
YOU'RE CUTE.
DO YOU WANT TO WORK AT MY BROTHEL? YOU COULD BECOME THE MOST POPULAR GIRL VERY QUICKLY.


THEIR ADVERTISEMENT IS BECOMING FANCIER.
THANKS TO THIS, WE FEAR NO INJURIES FROM OUR PERFORMANCE!
IT'S MADE FROM FROGS FROM A CERTAIN COUNTRY AND THE RESULTS ARE MIRACULOUS!
THEY WERE THE APOTHECARIES WE SAW!


AS A RESULT, IT THOROUGHLY--
THE MEDICINAL PROPERTIES ARE ABSORBED THROUGH YOUR SKIN AND INCREASE YOUR METABOLISM.
OF COURSE, IT'S A CURE-ALL.
DOES IT WORK FOR STAB WOUNDS?

EITHER WAY, IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM, JOIN THEM.

I'D LIKE TO PROVE MY WORTH AS A LEGITIMATE APOTHECARY, AND FIND COMMON GROUND WITH LULU.

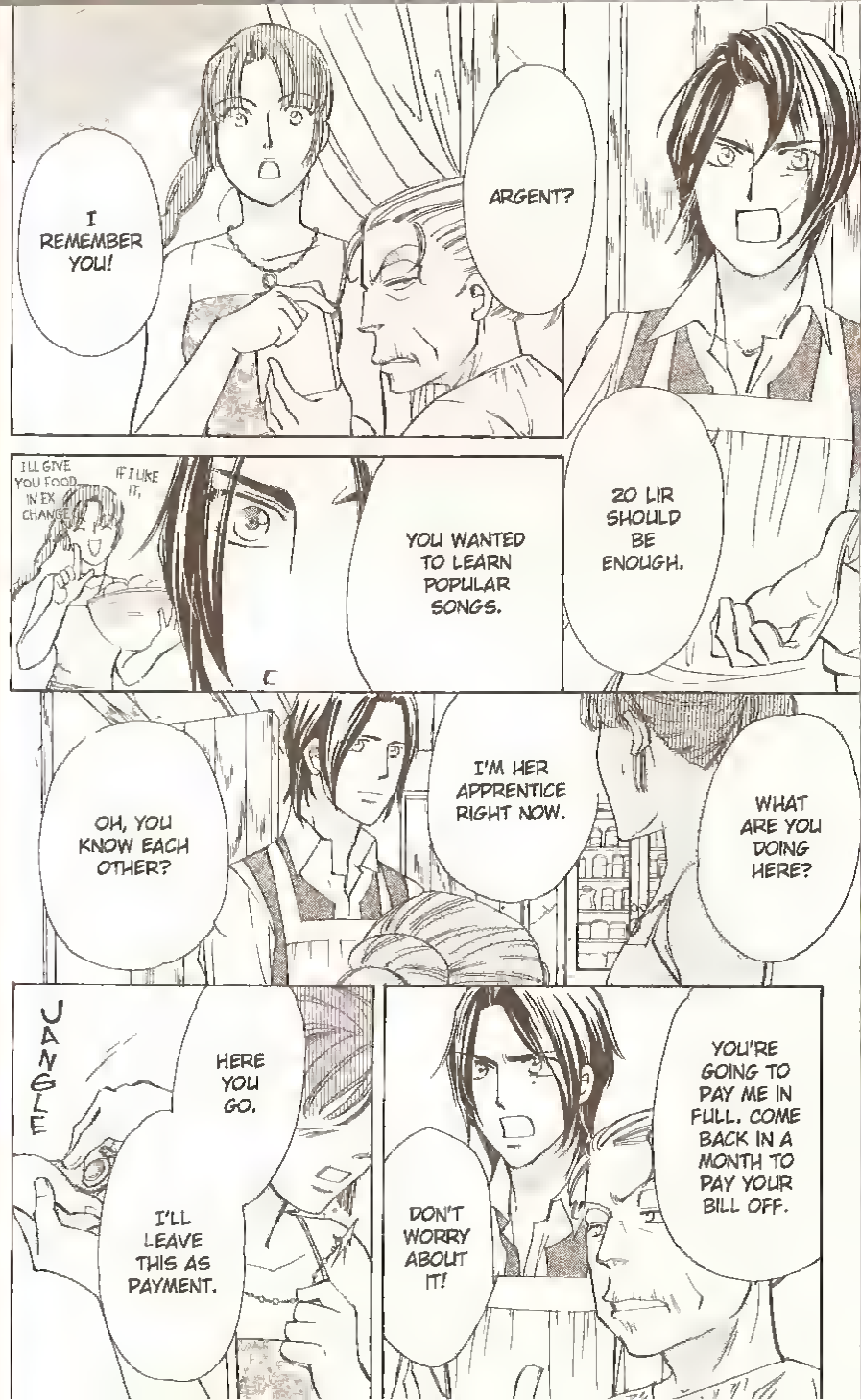


I WONDER IF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH ZETTON...
OKAY, PERFECT!
YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO, KID!
WELL, THIS WOULD DEFINITELY SAVE TIME ONCE I GET BETTER AT IT.
SLAM
THAT'S NOTHING TO BE IMPRESSED ABOUT.
HOW SAD.
YOU KNOW, MEASURING BY FEEL ISN'T TOO BAD.
TWIRL TWIRL TWIRL
SPLASH!
GRAB
SLAM
SHE'S HER USUAL SELF TODAY.
MASTER? WHAT'S UP?
THE TOTAL DUE IS 200 LIR. HERE'S YOUR STOMACH MEDICINE.
THAT MUCH? I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ...
WAIT!

Siam

I'M JUST 13. I CAN'T LEGALLY BECOME A COURTESAN UNTIL I'M 16.
WE MAY BE IN MINO VALLEY, BUT THAT'S A SERIOUS OFFENSE.
COME ON, COME WITH ME.
NO WORRIES, HON. THINGS HAVE RELAXED, AND THEY'LL TURN A BLIND EYE.
BESIDES, I HAVE A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS HERE.
STOMP
STOMP
CASTORIA HAS CHANGED SO MUCH!
I CAN'T BELIEVE PEOPLE HAVE LOWERED THEIR STANDARDS SO MUCH WHILE I WAS GONE.
THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE REMAINS THE SAME, BUT SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE A LAST-DITCH EFFORT...
BOSS, WE'RE IN TROUBLE. THERE HAVE BEEN CLAIMS THAT THE OINTMENT DOESN'T WORK.
MAYBE WE DIDN'T MAKE IT RIGHT.

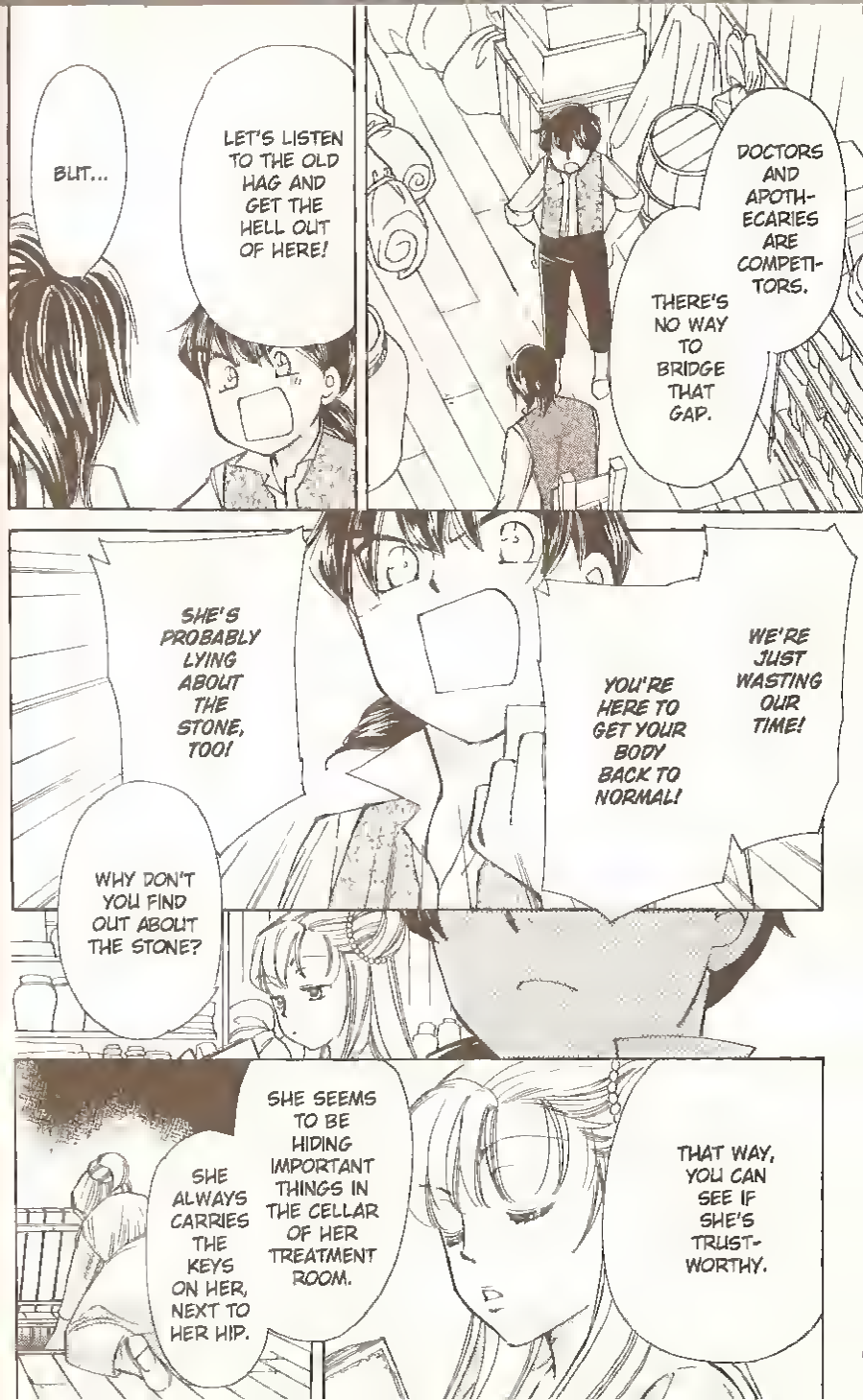
SHE TOOK OFF.
DAMMIT, KEEP YOUR TRAP SHUT!
YOU JUST GROUND UP POWDERED CHESTNUT WITH SOME STARCH!
AH, SO YOU CAUGHT ONTO THAT. YOU'RE QUICK.
SHE DOESN'T NEED MEDICINE, SO I DIDN'T GIVE HER ANY.
I TOLD YOU, ILLNESS STARTS IN THE HEAD.
WELL, YOU SHOULDN'T CHEAT PEOPLE!
APOTHECARIES SHOULD KEEP THEIR TRAP SHUT AND FOLLOW THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS!
ACTUALLY, I HAVE TO SPEAK OUT AS AN APOTHECARY.


ARGENT?
I REMEMBER YOU!
20 LIR SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
YOU WANTED TO LEARN POPULAR SONGS.
I'LL GIVE YOU FOOD IN EXCHANGE IF I LIKE IT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M HER APPRENTICE RIGHT NOW.
OH, YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY ME IN FULL. COME BACK IN A MONTH TO PAY YOUR BILL OFF.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
HERE YOU GO.
I'LL LEAVE THIS AS PAYMENT.
JANGLE

AS A DOCTOR, I DON'T CARE HOW SKILLED YOU ARE. IT HURTS MY BUSINESS.
YOUR KIND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF PEOPLE'S IGNORANCE, SHOWS OFF THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND DISTRIBUTES MEDICINE.
BASICALLY, YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT WE DO BECAUSE IT HURTS YOUR BOTTOM LINE?
TO BE BLUNT, THAT'S RIGHT.
I DON'T NEED YOU TO BUTT INTO MY BUSINESS.
IF THAT BOTHERS YOU, GET OUT!
WHY IS SHE SO STUBBORN?

YOU'RE A SKILLED DOCTOR, BUT YOU HAVE A TERRIBLE ATTITUDE!
IT PREVENTS PEOPLE FROM WANTING TO HELP YOU.
I'M SORRY, I SAID TOO MUCH.
I ADMIT ...
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING AS AN APOTHECARY.
FOR PAIN, YOU GIVE THEM PAINKILLERS.
FOR FEVER, SOMETHING TO COOL THE BODY. I'M SURE THERE ARE APOTHECARIES WHO LISTEN TO THEIR PATIENTS AND SET THEIR MINDS AT EASE.
IF YOU ASK ME, I THINK THAT'S *ARROGANT*.

HOW WILL WE GET THE KEYS?
WE SHOULD MAKE SURE OF THIS RIGHT NOW!
IF ARGENT'S STONE IS TO BE FOUND, I BET IT'S THERE.
I KNEW HE WOULD MENTION IT!
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
WE SHOULD USE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND DRUG HER!
MASTER, GIVE HER A DRINK! HURRY!
...
WHAT IS IT?
MASTER ...
YOU'RE HERE FOR A MAKE-UP DRINK?

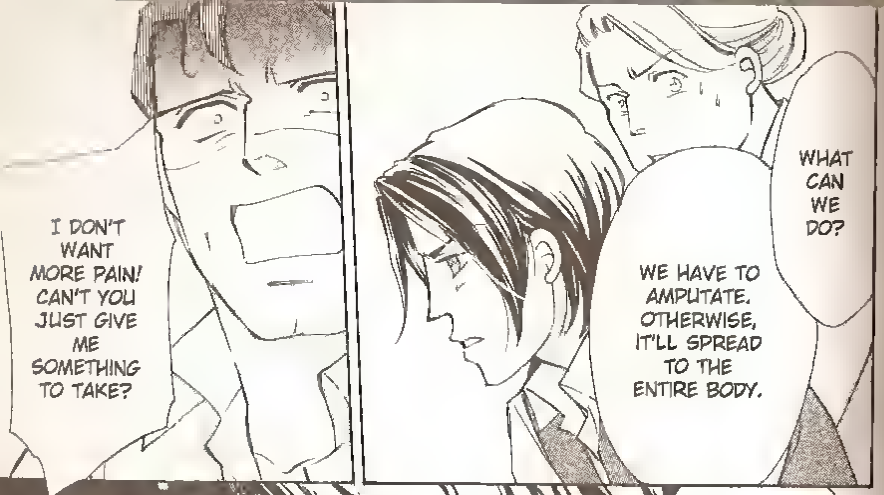

BUT...
LET'S LISTEN TO THE OLD HAG AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
DOCTORS AND APOTH-ECARIES ARE COMPETI-TORS.
THERE'S NO WAY TO BRIDGE THAT GAP.
SHE'S PROBABLY LYING ABOUT THE STONE, TOO!
YOU'RE HERE TO GET YOUR BODY BACK TO NORMAL!
WE'RE JUST WASTING OUR TIME!
WHY DON'T YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE STONE?
SHE ALWAYS CARRIES THE KEYS ON HER, NEXT TO HER HIP.
SHE SEEMS TO BE HIDING IMPORTANT THINGS IN THE CELLAR OF HER TREATMENT ROOM.
THAT WAY, YOU CAN SEE IF SHE'S TRUST-WORTHY.

MEDICINE ISN'T ALWAYS THE BEST ROUTE. TAKING TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING CAN BECOME TOXIC TO THE BODY.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT AS A BASILISK MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE.
IT'S GOOD TO BE DESPISED AS A DOCTOR IN A PLACE LIKE THIS. IT'S BEST TO BE EXPENSIVE, YOU SEE?
MASTER, WE DID IT!
ACTUALLY, SHE PASSED OUT BEFORE I POURED HER A DRINK.
CLATTER
BESIDES, IN THE CASE OF THAT GIRL--

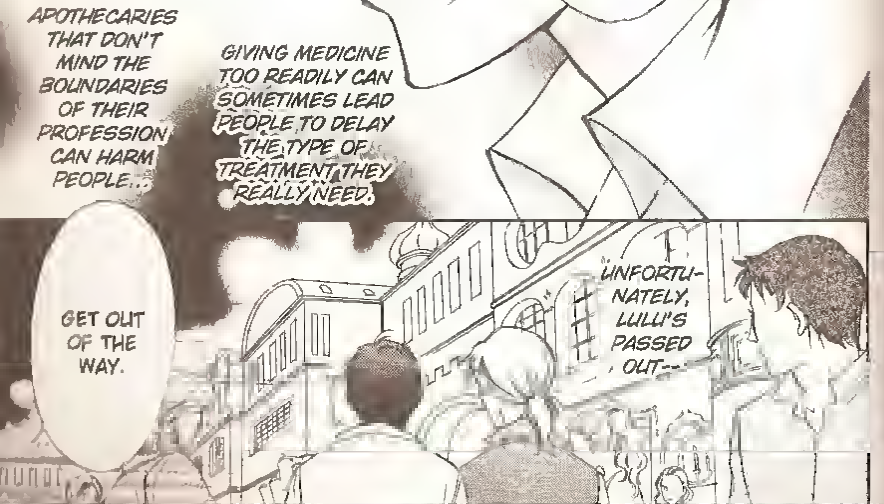
I DON'T THINK IT'S FAIR TO TREAT PEOPLE RUDELY WHEN THEY'RE WEAK.
HOWEVER, WITH PATIENTS ...
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU VIEW APOTHECARIES.
THAT'S WHERE DOCTORS AND APOTH-ECARIES DIFFER.
YOU THINK MEDICINE AND TREATMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EH?
WATER, FOOD, DAILY LIFESTYLE CAN PREVENT A LOT. THAT'S WHY I DON'T GIVE HANDOUTS TO MAKE THINGS EASIER.
EXPENSIVE MEDICATION WILL BE APPRECIATED MORE. PAIN CAN TEACH PEOPLE A LOT ABOUT PREVENTION SO THEY WON'T NEED TO SEE ME.
PAIN AND FEVER ARE SIGNS THAT THE BODY GIVES OUT FOR A REASON. THEY SHOULDN'T ALWAYS BE RESOLVED.
THE MOST IMPORTANT PART ABOUT HEALTH IS PREVENTION.

LULU, LULU! WAKE UP!
CRAP! MASTER, WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY!
MY HUSBAND'S HOLDING HIS LEG, AND HE'S IN INCREDIBLE PAIN...
SODA?
MASTER LULU...
THE WATER'S BEEN DRUGGED, THOUGH IT'S HARD TO TELL...
SODA, WHAT'S WRONG?
WAIT, IT'S THAT SUBSTANCE THAT MAKES ME DIZZY...!
EVEN POPOLA'S ASLEEP. WHAT'S GOING ON?

CRAP, YOUR MASOCHISM IS SHOWING ITSELF AGAIN!
WELL, LET'S GRAB THE KEYS AND---
NEVER-MIND. I CHANGED MY MIND.
I'M GOING TO SEE THROUGH THE THREE MONTHS.
I WANT TO LEARN MORE FROM LULU.
SLAM
LULU!
I'LL DO THIS MYSELF!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
UMM, AS YOU CAN SEE, THE OLD HAG, UH... MY MASTER IS ASLEEP.
HUH? WHAT'S UP?
IS LULU AVAILABLE?


I DON'T WANT MORE PAIN! CAN'T YOU JUST GIVE ME SOMETHING TO TAKE?
WHAT CAN WE DO?
WE HAVE TO AMPUTATE. OTHERWISE, IT'LL SPREAD TO THE ENTIRE BODY.

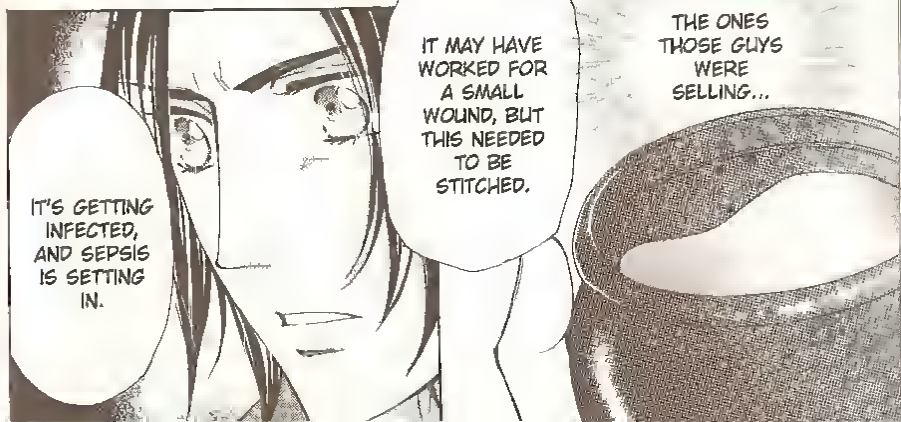
THIS IS WHAT LULU WAS TALKING ABOUT.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED WITH MEDICINE ANYMORE.
THIS REQUIRES A TREATMENT FROM A DOCTOR.

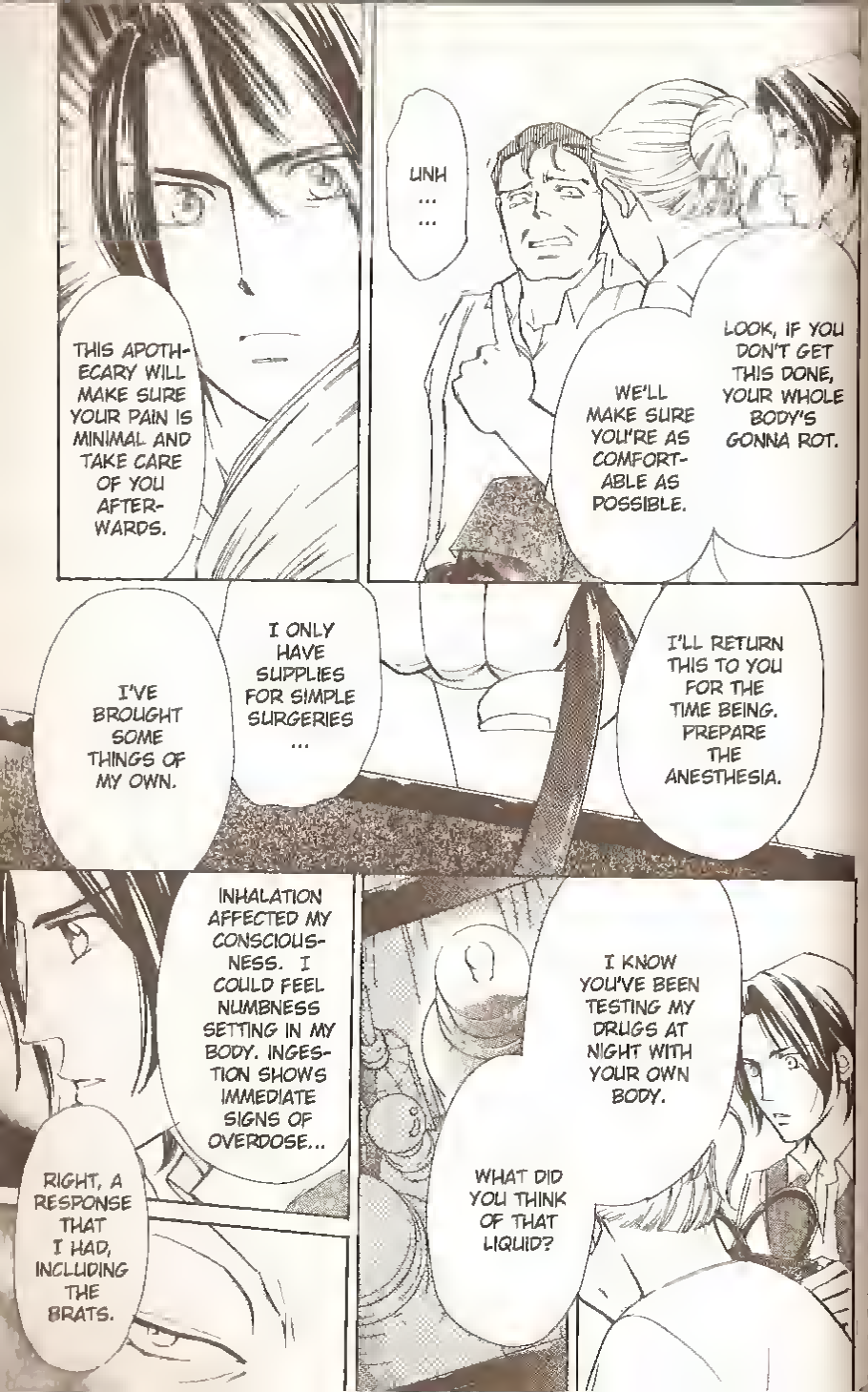

APOTHECARIES THAT DON'T MIND THE BOUNDARIES OF THEIR PROFESSION CAN HARM PEOPLE...
GIVING MEDICINE TOO READILY CAN SOMETIMES LEAD PEOPLE TO DELAY THE TYPE OF TREATMENT THEY REALLY NEED.
GET OUT OF THE WAY.
UNFORTU-NATELY, LULU'S PASSED OUT...

OWW, IT HURTS SO BADLY. DO SOMETHING QUICK!
RIGHT AWAY!
WELL, CAN YOU PLEASE SEE HIM NOW?

WE WERE TREATING IT WITH THIS SO-CALLED MIRACLE CREAM.
WHY DIDN'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT RIGHT AWAY?

2 WEEKS AGO.
WHEN DID YOU GET INJURED?


IT'S GETTING INFECTED, AND SEPSIS IS SETTING IN.
IT MAY HAVE WORKED FOR A SMALL WOUND, BUT THIS NEEDED TO BE STITCHED.
THE ONES THOSE GUYS WERE SELLING...


THIS APOTHECARY WILL MAKE SURE YOUR PAIN IS MINIMAL AND TAKE CARE OF YOU AFTERWARDS.
UNH ... ...
WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU'RE AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE.
LOOK, IF YOU DON'T GET THIS DONE, YOUR WHOLE BODY'S GONNA ROT.
I'VE BROUGHT SOME THINGS OF MY OWN.
I ONLY HAVE SUPPLIES FOR SIMPLE SURGERIES ...
I'LL RETURN THIS TO YOU FOR THE TIME BEING. PREPARE THE ANESTHESIA.
RIGHT, A RESPONSE THAT I HAD, INCLUDING THE BRATS.
INHALATION AFFECTED MY CONSCIOUSNESS. I COULD FEEL NUMBNESS SETTING IN MY BODY. INGESTION SHOWS IMMEDIATE SIGNS OF OVERDOSE...
WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THAT LIQUID?
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN TESTING MY DRUGS AT NIGHT WITH YOUR OWN BODY.

MUMBLE
LULU, HOW DID YOU...
A KNIFE IN HER LEG?!
I'M NOT AT THE TOP OF MY GAME, SO I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS THIS.
SHE STABBED HERSELF TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.
SO FAR, HE'S NO LONGER IN GRAVE DANGER. HE'S STILL ASLEEP FROM THE ANESTHETIC.
YOU CAN RELAX FOR NOW.
WE APOLOGIZE ...
ALL THIS MESS BECAUSE OF SOME FRAUDULENT DRUG-PEDDLERS.
I'M SO TIRED.
LACK AND BEAN, SHOW YOURSELVES!
JOLT
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT YOU, I'M TALKING ABOUT OTHER IDIOTS!
YOU BACK YOUR BIG MOUTH WITH SKILL. I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET THROUGH THE PROCEDURE WITHOUT YOUR HELP.
YOU DID WELL, I HAVE TO SAY.

WITH SURGERY, SPEED IS THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE, AS WELL AS ACCURACY. YOU WANT TO MINIMIZE BLOOD LOSS AND YOU DON'T WANT TO TEST THE PATIENT'S ENDURANCE.
IT'S TOXIC, BUT IT CAN BE USED AS AN ANESTHETIC THROUGH INHALATION IN MEASURED DOSES.
THIS IS AN ALCOHOLIC EXTRACT OF A COMBINATION OF THINGS.
YOU'VE EXPERIENCED THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF THE ANESTHETIC. YOU'RE ON PAR WITH ME REGARDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.
WHILE I FOCUS ON THE SURGERY, YOU CAN DEAL WITH THE ANESTHETICS AND ANY OTHER NECESSARY DRUGS.
LET'S GET STARTED.

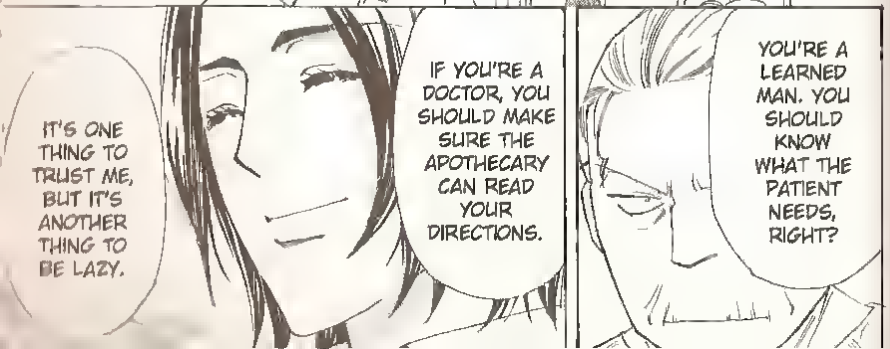
I DIDN'T REALIZE THE WATER WAS DRUGGED BECAUSE I WAS DRUNK. MY PATIENT EARLIER DIDN'T COME TO ME BECAUSE OF MY EXORBITANT FEES.
I ADMIT, I HAVE SOME BLAME TO SHOULDER HERE.
WE BEG FOR YOUR FORGIVE-NESS.
YOU'RE ABSO-LUTELY CORRECT, MASTER!
IF YOU SCREW WITH ME AGAIN, BRING SHAME TO OUR PROFESSION, AND SELL SOME WORTHLESS CRAP AS MEDICINE, YOU'RE DEAD MEAT!!
I'LL CUT YOU SLACK JUST THIS ONCE!
MASTER, I'M... I'M IMPRESSED!
YES! WE'RE LEAVING NOW!
NOW, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE AND DON'T EVER SHOW YOURSELVES AGAIN.

BUT... THEY CALLED HER MASTER.
YOU'RE THE MIRACLE CREAM PEDDLER.
WE'RE SORRY, MASTER LULU.
THEY COULDN'T HACK IT, STOLE MY MEDICINES AND TOOK OFF.
WHEN THEY GOT INJURED, I TREATED THEM. THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH MY SKILL AND INSISTED ON LEARNING FROM ME.
THEY'RE MY FORMER ASSIS-TANTS. THEY'RE FOREIGN STREET PERFORM-ERS.
YOU'RE BACK BECAUSE YOU RAN OUT OF MY MEDICINE, RIGHT? YOU TRIED TO MAKE DRUGS YOURSELF BUT COULD ONLY COME UP WITH INFERIOR CRAP. SO, NOW YOU'RE BACK TO STEAL FROM ME AGAIN.
I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT THEM TO BE SELLING MEDICINE WITH THEIR HALF-BAKED KNOWLEDGE.
I WENT TO LOOK FOR THEM IN THE CITY.

I'M JUST SHOCKED THAT YOU CAN PREVENT INFECTION WITH MOLD.

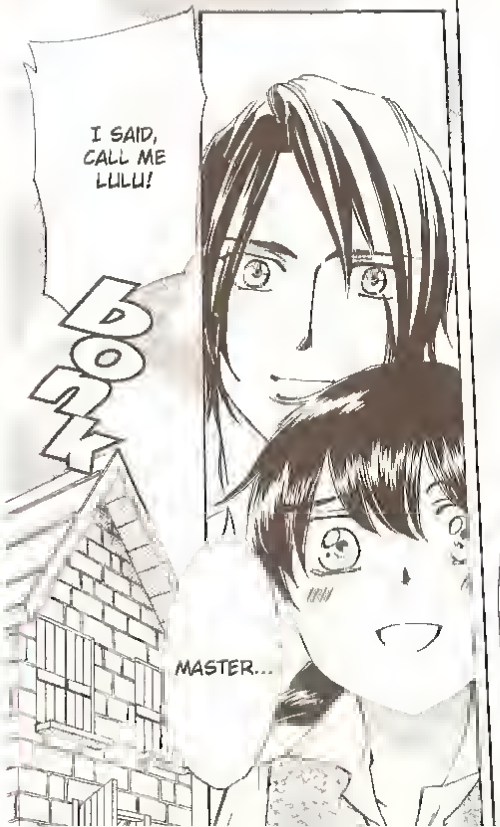
ARGENT, I WANT YOU TO PREPARE THESE FOR TOMORROW.
THE LAST PATIENTS' MEDICATIONS.
I JUST TESTED EVERYTHING I COULD AND MADE THE BEST OF IT.
AS YOU CAN SEE, WE DON'T EXACTLY HAVE A LOT OF RE-SOURCES.

ARE YOU CRITICIZING MY HAND-WRITING?
IT LOOKS LIKE A PARADE OF WORMS.
LULU, I CAN'T READ YOUR WRITING.


IT'S ONE THING TO TRUST ME, BUT IT'S ANOTHER THING TO BE LAZY.
IF YOU'RE A DOCTOR, YOU SHOULD MAKE SURE THE APOTHECARY CAN READ YOUR DIRECTIONS.
YOU'RE A LEARNED MAN. YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT THE PATIENT NEEDS, RIGHT?

JUST CALL ME LULU FROM NOW ON.

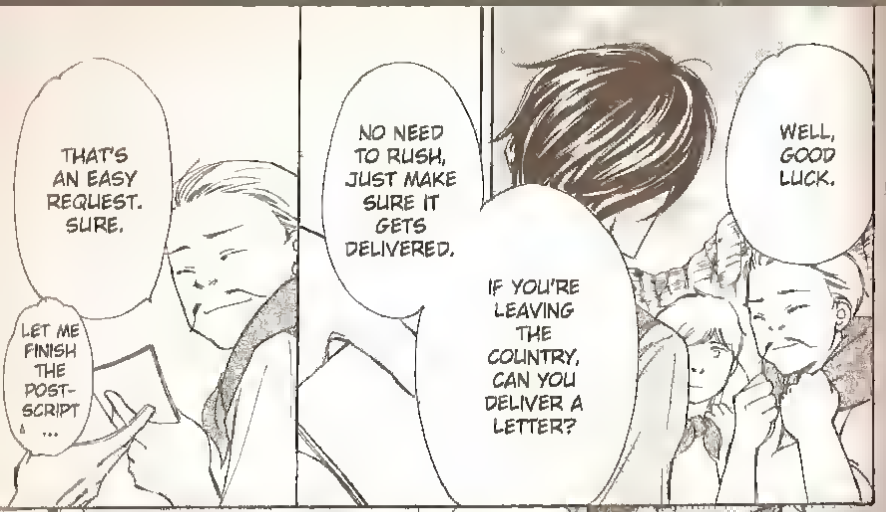
CUT THAT CRAP OUT!!
PLEASE, LET ME CALL YOU MY MASTER'S MASTER!
BASH


I SAID, CALL ME LULU!
BONK
MASTER...

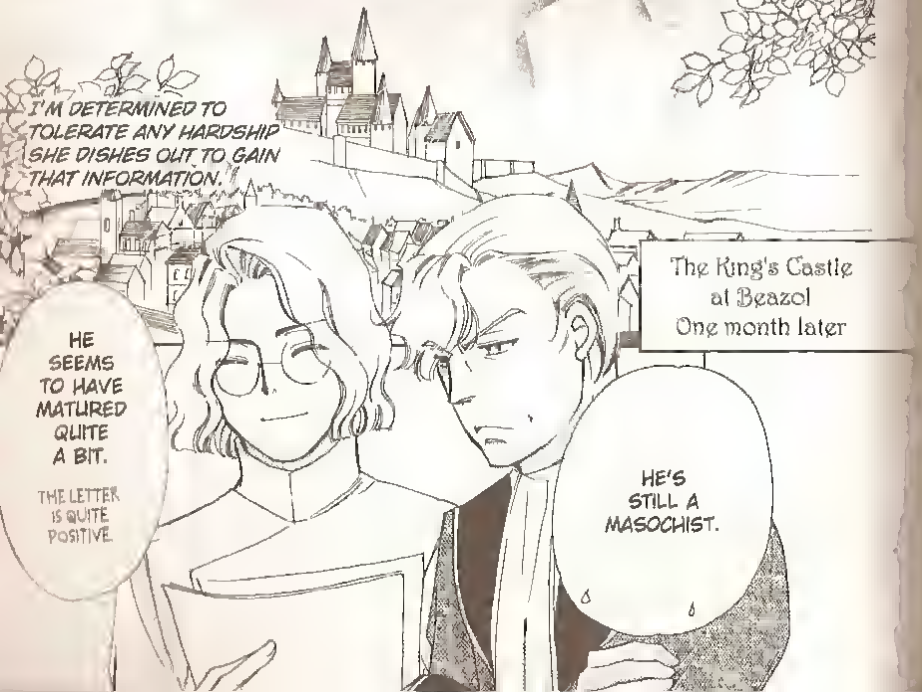
IT'S EASIER TO WORK TOGETHER IF WE COOPERATE AS EQUALS.

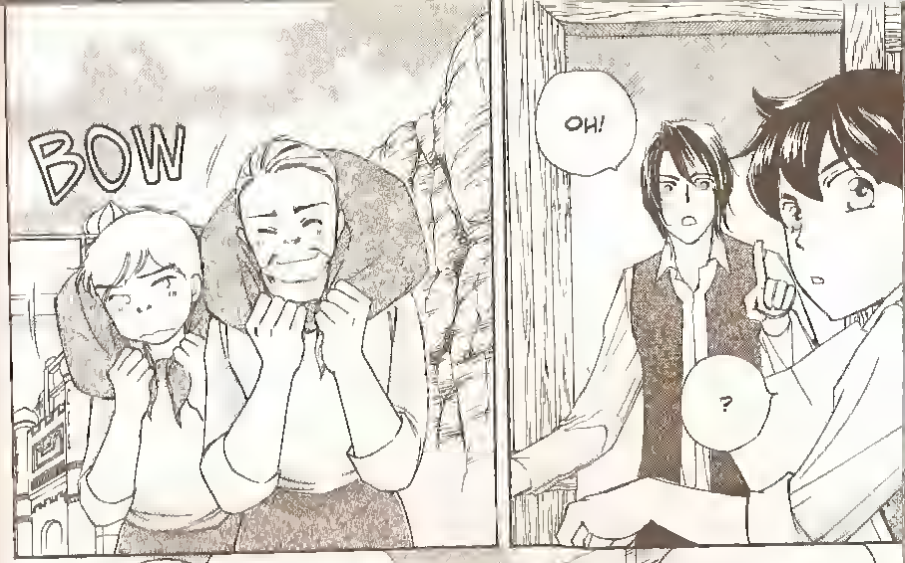
MAYBE IT'S OUR AGE DIFFERENCE.
I FEEL LIKE IF I HAD A MOTHER, SHE WOULD SCOLD AND YELL AT ME LIKE LULU HAS...
I THINK---
GRAB
I COULDN'T BE BOTHERED WITH A BRATTY SON LIKE HIM!
HE'S SUCH A DREAMER.
YOU'RE BOTH TWISTED AND BRUSQUE.
SLAM
SODA!
NO CAN DO!
GIVE MY LETTER BACK!
DASH DASH DASH
SO IMMATURE
LULU! SODA!

NO...
I THINK DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES WORKING TOGETHER CAN BECOME BIG BUSINESS.
YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, CAN YOU?
I ONLY HAVE TO DEAL WITH YOU FOR TWO MONTHS
FINE, I'LL RE-WRITE IT.
I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT TRUST AND COOPERATION ARE PARAMOUNT WHEN DEALING WITH OTHERS! HOWEVER, I REALIZE I HAVE BEEN SIMPLISTIC.
THIS IS FOR THE BEST.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A CERTAIN SENSE OF DISTANCE, COOPERATE WHEN NECESSARY, AND ARGUE WHEN IT'S NOT. I CAN'T EXPLAIN VERY CLEARLY, BUT I BELIEVE THAT IS THE MOST PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES.


THAT'S AN EASY REQUEST. SURE.
LET ME FINISH THE POST-SCRIPT ♪ ...
NO NEED TO RUSH, JUST MAKE SURE IT GETS DELIVERED.
IF YOU'RE LEAVING THE COUNTRY, CAN YOU DELIVER A LETTER?
WELL, GOOD LUCK.

I BELIEVE LULU KNOWS HOW TO DETOXIFY A BASILISK.
DON'T MOVE SO I CAN WRITE.
SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE
MM, THAT TICKLES! ♪


I'M DETERMINED TO TOLERATE ANY HARDSHIP SHE DISHES OUT TO GAIN THAT INFORMATION.
The King's Castle at Beazol One month later
HE SEEMS TO HAVE MATURED QUITE A BIT.
THE LETTER IS QUITE POSITIVE.
HE'S STILL A MASOCHIST. ♪ ♪


BOW
OH!
?

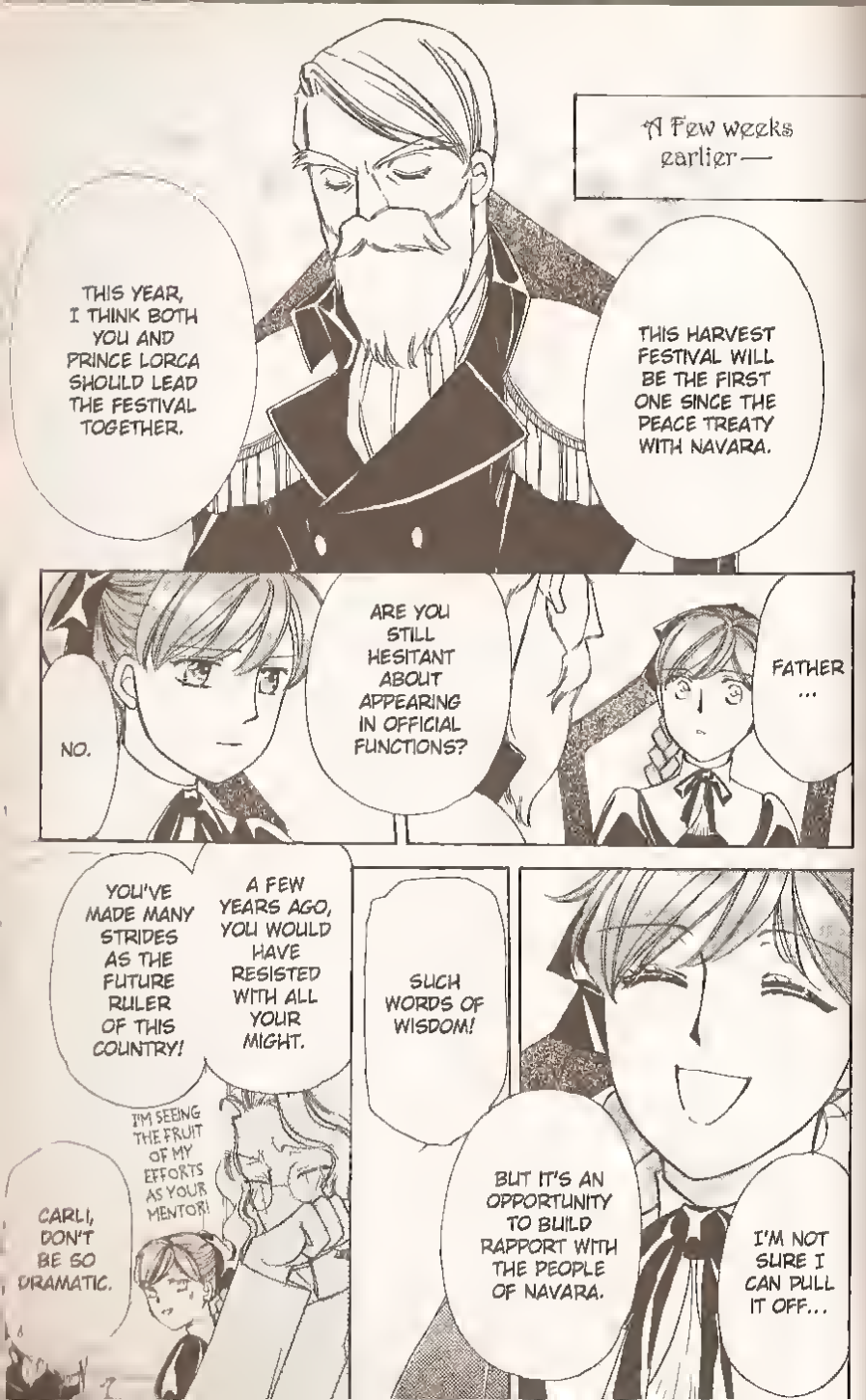
WE'LL NEVER TROUBLE HER AGAIN.
PLEASE TELL MASTER LULU OUR MESSAGE THAT...
WE DECIDED TO GO BACK TO OUR FORMER PROFESSION AND LEAVE CASTORIA.
DON'T WORRY, MY MASTER'S SMART, AND HE HAS A MASOCHISTIC STREAK.
SO ARE YOU!
THWAK
WE JUST COULDN'T DEAL WITH HER PERSONALITY. YOU'LL FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER...
WE WERE IMPRESSED WITH HER SKILL. WE HONESTLY WANTED TO LEARN FROM HER.

Apothecarius Argentum

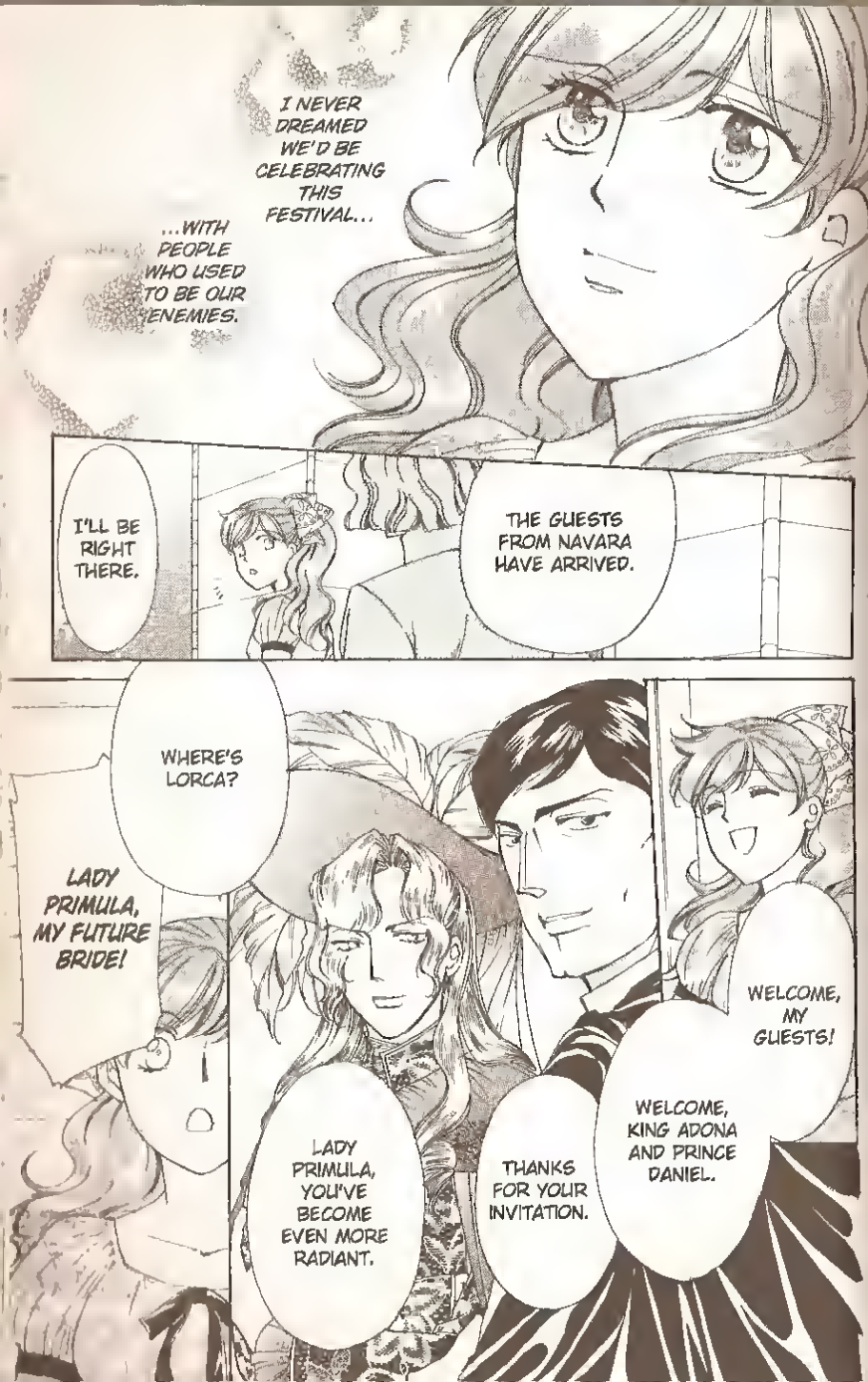
Recipe 24 • Storm

I'M GLAD ARGENT'S DOING WELL. THANK YOU FOR DELIVERING THE LETTER.
HEY, WE HAD NO IDEA HE WAS THE FAMOUS "SILVER APOTHECARY" OF BEAZOL...
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO ABOUT THE REPLY, MY LADY?
WE CAN NO LONGER ENTER CASTORIA, BUT I CAN LEAVE IT WITH SOMEONE NEAR THE BORDER.
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
I DO HAVE A QUESTION FIRST.
SO, WHAT ARE POPOLA AND LULU LIKE?
ARE THEY SEXY OR PRETTY?
WELL, UHM...
THE PRINCESS IS JEALOUS
OH THERE'S P.S NUMBER 2!
P.P.S. WITH LOVE AND FAITH FROM THE SILVER APOTHECARY TO LADY PRIMULA OF BEAZOL.

Recipe 23/ The End

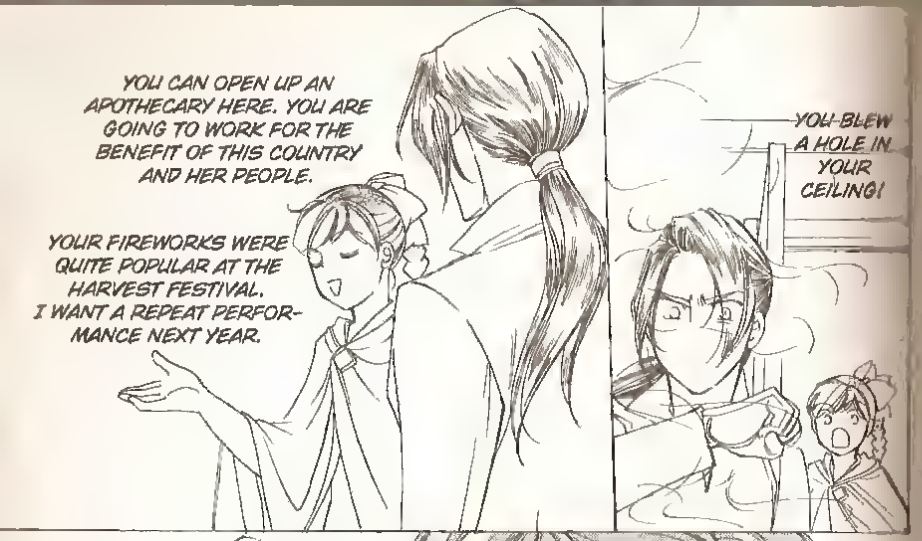

A Few weeks earlier—
THIS YEAR, I THINK BOTH YOU AND PRINCE LORCA SHOULD LEAD THE FESTIVAL TOGETHER.
THIS HARVEST FESTIVAL WILL BE THE FIRST ONE SINCE THE PEACE TREATY WITH NAVARA.
NO.
ARE YOU STILL HESITANT ABOUT APPEARING IN OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS?
FATHER ...
YOU'VE MADE MANY STRIDES AS THE FUTURE RULER OF THIS COUNTRY!
A FEW YEARS AGO, YOU WOULD HAVE RESISTED WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
I'M SEEING THE FRUIT OF MY EFFORTS AS YOUR MENTOR!
CARL, DON'T BE SO DRAMATIC.
SUCH WORDS OF WISDOM!
BUT IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD RAPPORT WITH THE PEOPLE OF NAVARA.
I'M NOT SURE I CAN PULL IT OFF...

DEAR ARGENT, I HOPE YOU ARE DOING WELL IN CASTORIA.
THE OTHER DAY, LACK AND BEAN, TRAVELING STREET PERFORMERS, DELIVERED A MESSAGE FROM YOU.
BACK AT HOME, WE'RE...
...GETTING READY FOR THE HARVEST FESTIVAL.


I NEVER DREAMED WE'D BE CELEBRATING THIS FESTIVAL...
...WITH PEOPLE WHO USED TO BE OUR ENEMIES.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
THE GUESTS FROM NAVARA HAVE ARRIVED.
WHERE'S LORCA?
LADY PRIMULA, MY FUTURE BRIDE!
LADY PRIMULA, YOU'VE BECOME EVEN MORE RADIANT.
THANKS FOR YOUR INVITATION.
WELCOME, KING ADONA AND PRINCE DANIEL.
WELCOME, MY GUESTS!

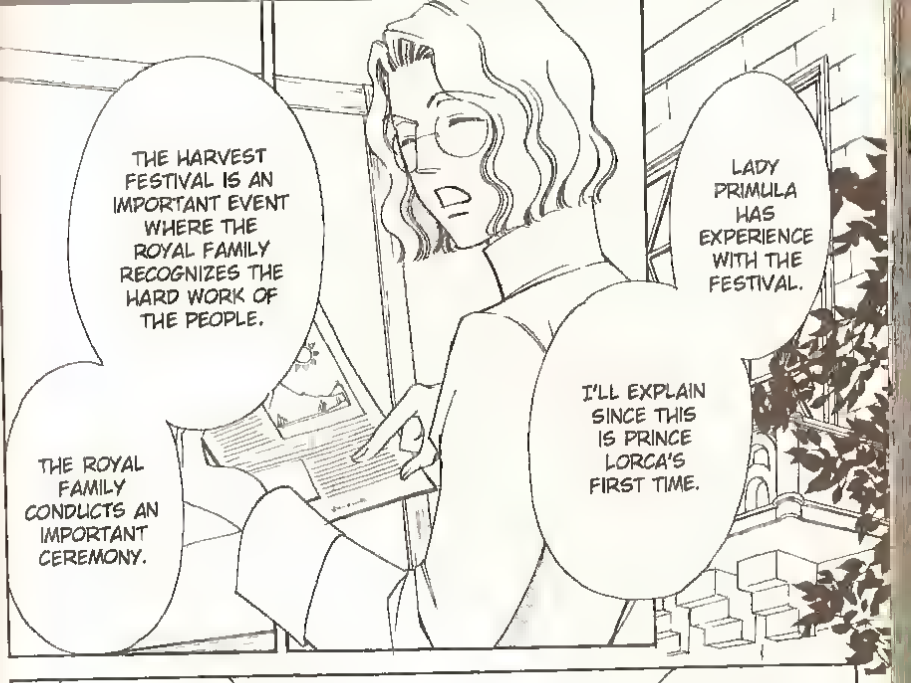
...
I'M SURE THE PEOPLE WILL ENJOY IT, AND I'D LIKE MORE TIME TO DRAFT MY LETTER TO ARGENT.
LACK AND BEAN, WHY DON'T YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE FESTIVAL IF YOU HAVE TIME?
STREET PERFORMERS LIVE DAY BY DAY! WE GO WHERE THE WIND TAKES US.
WE DON'T HAVE A PARTICULAR DESTINATION.
WE WOULD LOVE TO.
WHITE!
MY LADY, RED OR WHITE FOR THE STAGE CURTAIN?
EVERY DAY IS FILLED WITH THINGS TO DO.
THE YEAR BEFORE, I TOOK OVER THE FESTIVAL FOR FATHER, WHO WAS AWAY DUE TO BORDER SQUABBLES WITH NAVARA.
WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NEXT?
LAST FESTIVAL, I WAS IN NAVARA AND DIDN'T PARTICIPATE.

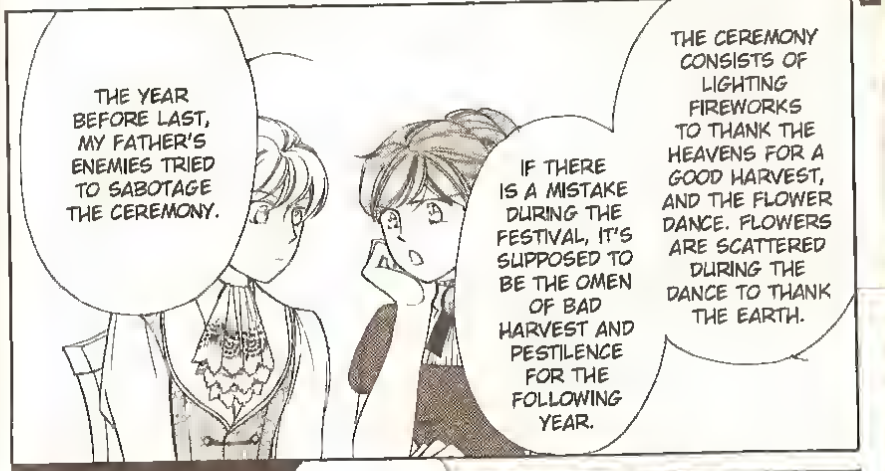
A LOT HAPPENED IN NAVARA. DANIEL HELPED HIM DO RESEARCH ON CASTORIA.
MY BROTHER KNOWS ABOUT ARGENT'S SECRET.
I JUST HAPPENED UPON THE INFORMATION.
PRINCE DANIEL?
HE SHOULD HAVE JUST SEDUCED HER LIKE A BASILISK AND GAINED THE INFORMATION QUICKLY.
I'LL RELAX IN BEAZOL AND SPREAD MY SONGS OF LOVE.
I HAVE NO OFFICIAL DUTIES TO FULFILL.
LADY PRIMULA, I'LL LEAVE YOU TO LOOK AFTER MY RAMBUNCTIOUS BROTHER.
I STARTED TO EAT, THEN I BEGAN TO GROW PRETTY QUICKLY.
MY APPETITE'S RETURNING.
YOU'VE GROWN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU!
WHAT? LORCA?!
RUB RUB
I MISSED YOU!
BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU HEARD FROM ARGENT?
TRUE.
I'M STILL NOT AS TALL AS MY BROTHERS OR ARGENT.
HE'S NOT VERY SHARP, IS HE?
SHE'S A FEMALE DOCTOR, AND HE'S WORKING AS HER ASSISTANT ALONG WITH SODA.
KTZ
IT SEEMS HE WAS ABLE TO ENTER CASTORIA AND FOUND SOMEONE WITH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DETOXIFYING STONE.
I JUST RECEIVED A LETTER.


YOU CAN OPEN UP AN APOTHECARY HERE. YOU ARE GOING TO WORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF THIS COUNTRY AND HER PEOPLE.
YOUR FIREWORKS WERE QUITE POPULAR AT THE HARVEST FESTIVAL. I WANT A REPEAT PERFORMANCE NEXT YEAR.
YOU BLEW A HOLE IN YOUR CEILING!

...
I SHOULD HAVE HAD ARGENT MAKE ABOUT FIFTY ROUNDS OF THOSE FIREWORKS.
I WAS CARELESS.

I THINK IT SHOULD BE FINE.
WE CAN'T JUST CHANGE TRADITION ...
INSTEAD OF FIREWORKS, HOW ABOUT RELEASING BUTTERFLIES? THERE'S LESS CHANCE OF MISHAPS OR ACCIDENTS!
CARLI, THE FLOWER DANCE IS TO THANK THE EARTH, RIGHT?


THE HARVEST FESTIVAL IS AN IMPORTANT EVENT WHERE THE ROYAL FAMILY RECOGNIZES THE HARD WORK OF THE PEOPLE.
LADY PRIMULA HAS EXPERIENCE WITH THE FESTIVAL.
THE ROYAL FAMILY CONDUCTS AN IMPORTANT CEREMONY.
I'LL EXPLAIN SINCE THIS IS PRINCE LORCA'S FIRST TIME.

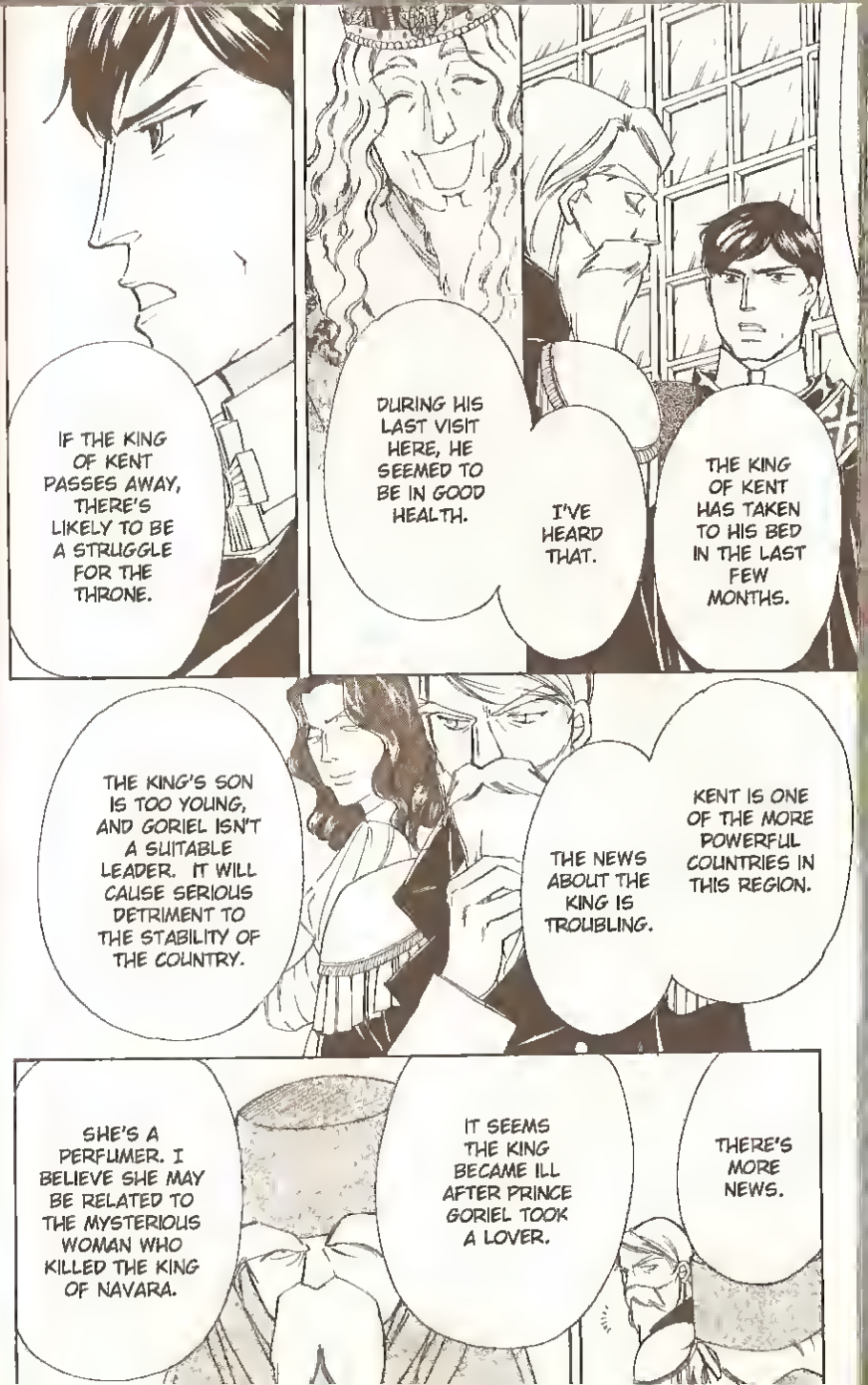

THE YEAR BEFORE LAST, MY FATHER'S ENEMIES TRIED TO SABOTAGE THE CEREMONY.
IF THERE IS A MISTAKE DURING THE FESTIVAL, IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE OMEN OF BAD HARVEST AND PESTILENCE FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR.
THE CEREMONY CONSISTS OF LIGHTING FIREWORKS TO THANK THE HEAVENS FOR A GOOD HARVEST, AND THE FLOWER DANCE. FLOWERS ARE SCATTERED DURING THE DANCE TO THANK THE EARTH.

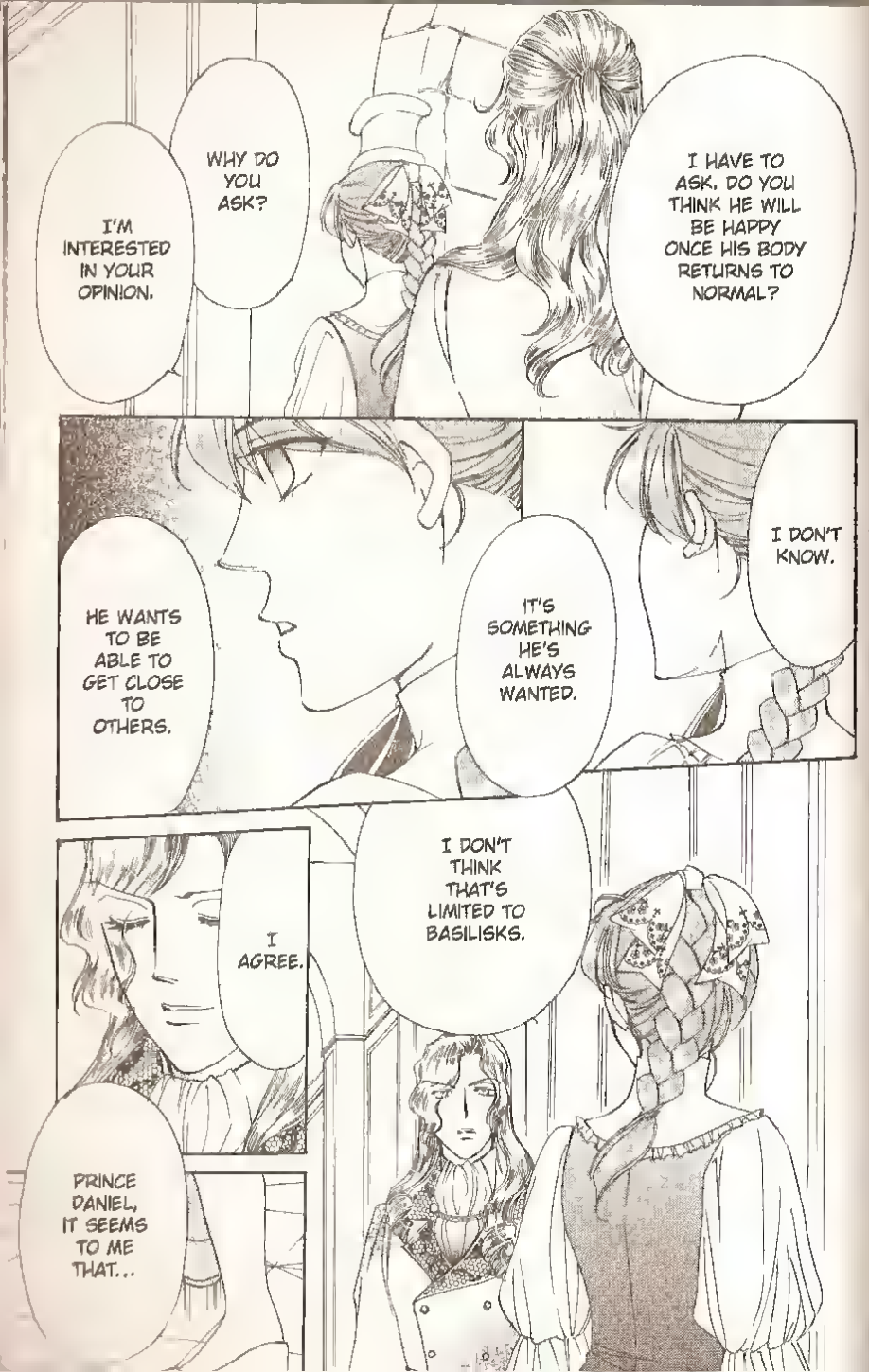
I LOVED HIS FIREWORKS, THOUGH...
SINCE HE'S NOT HERE THIS YEAR, THE CEREMONY WILL BE SIMPLER.
ARGENT HELPED ME AT THE LAST MINUTE.

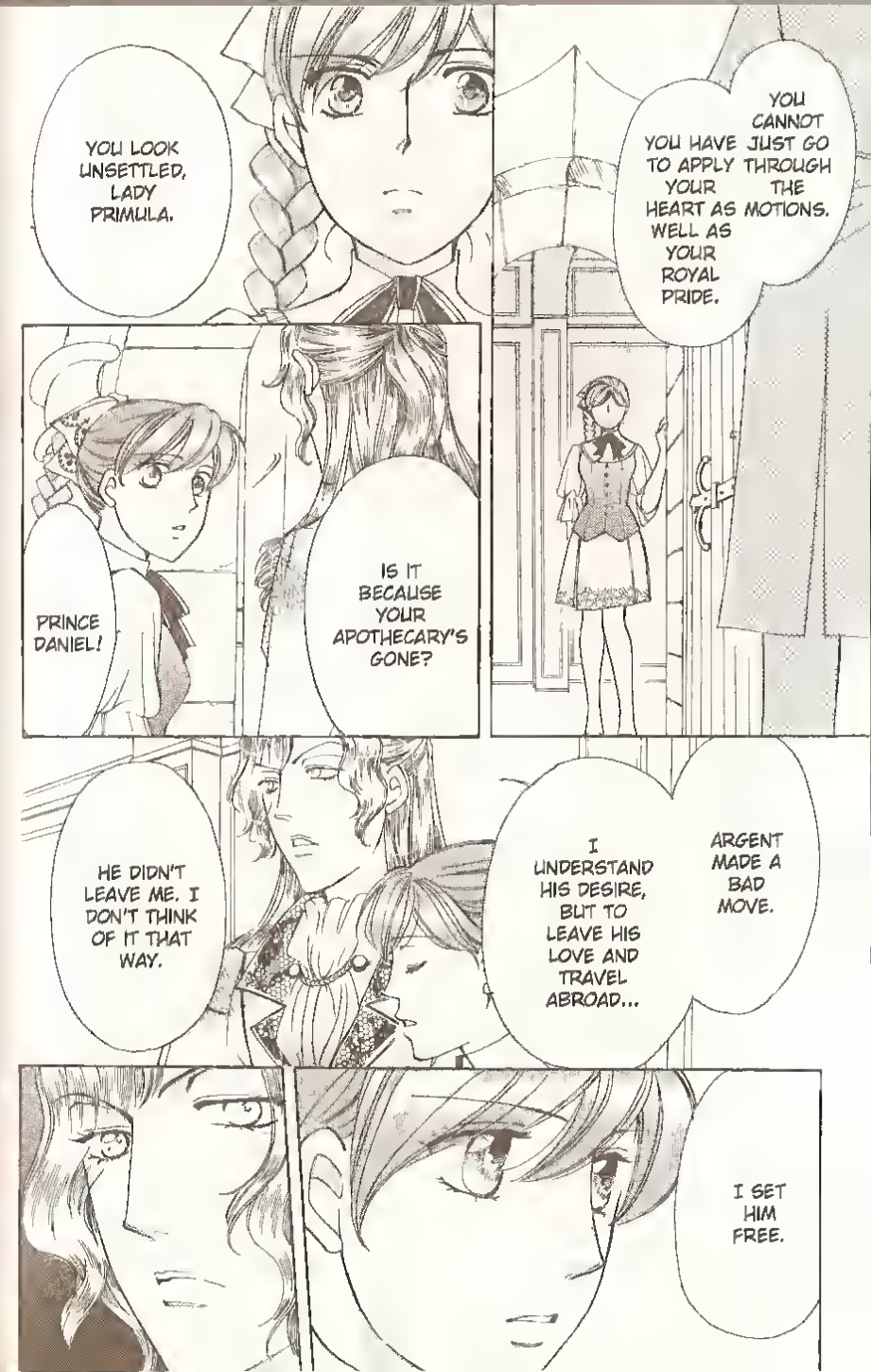
bonk
YOU'RE RUSHING THINGS, PRINCE LORCA.
I'LL MAKE SURE IT'S A SPECTACULAR CEREMONY. MAYBE WE CAN HAVE A WEDDING AT THE END!
YOUR NEW DYE INDUSTRY IS JUST STARTING TO REAP PROFITS.
IT'S NOT AT THE POINT OF RESURRECTING THE ECONOMY, RIGHT?
YOU'RE SHARP AS ALWAYS, YOUR MAJESTY.
FEH!
ARE YOU AWARE, YOUR MAJESTY?

YOUR MAJESTY!
WE'VE MADE PEACE WITH NAVARA. TO COMMEMORATE THE PEACE TREATY, MAYBE THE TRADITION CAN CHANGE.
FLOWERS AND...
INSECTS.
GOOD COMBINATION.
I'LL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREPARATION OF INSECTS.

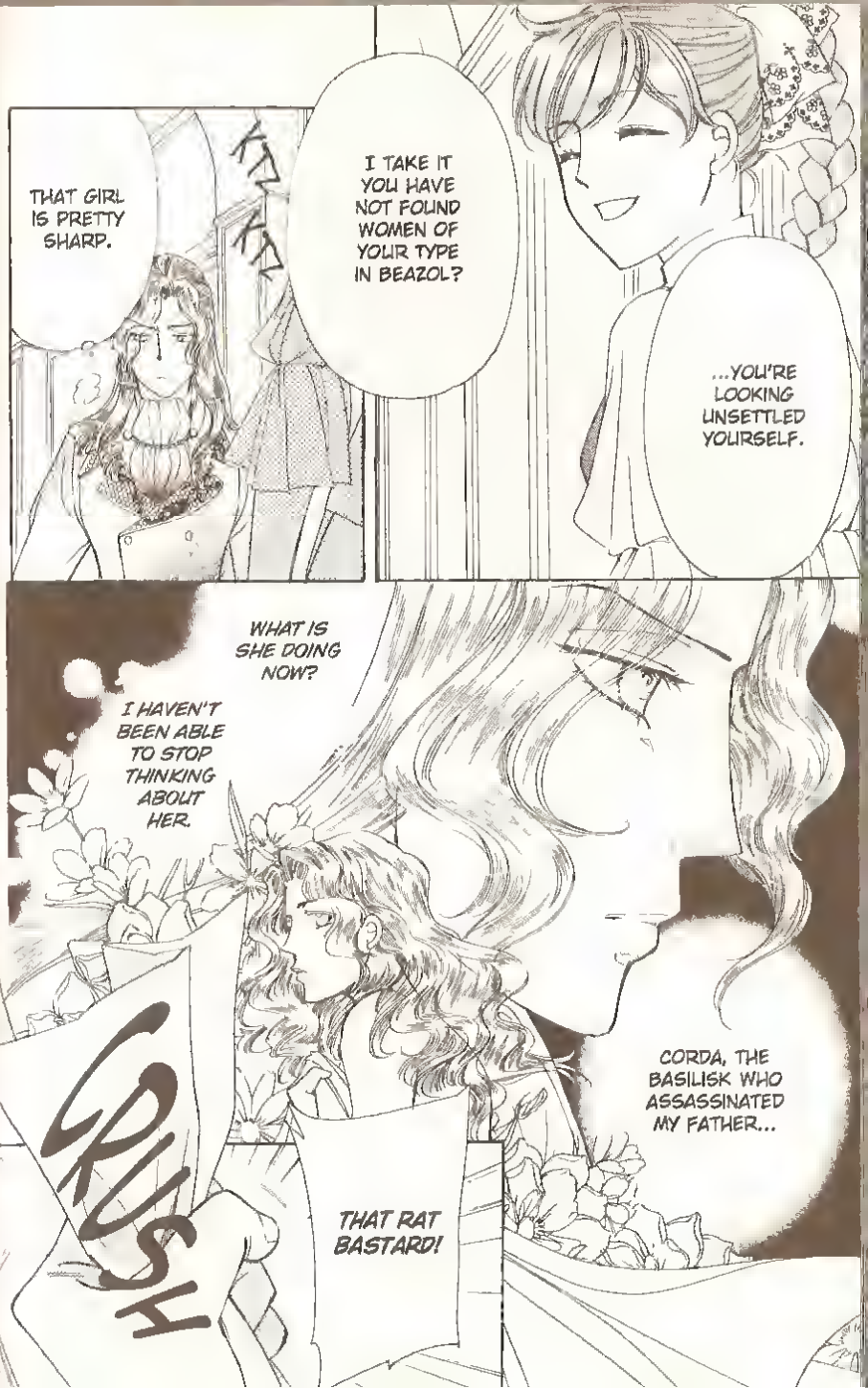
I THINK WE SHOULD WATCH AND WAIT...
DON'T YOU THINK THAT MAY BE AN UNNECESSARY RISK?
WE'LL HAVE TO CHECK. WE SHOULD INVITE PRINCE GORIEL TO THE HARVEST FESTIVAL.
WE NEED TO ACT QUICKLY.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT.
MANNERS START AND END WITH GRATITUDE.
PLEASE PAY ATTENTION, PRINCE LORCA.
YES, SIR!
START ON THE MARINADES AND COMPOTES... THINGS WE CAN MAKE AHEAD OF TIME.


IF THE KING OF KENT PASSES AWAY, THERE'S LIKELY TO BE A STRUGGLE FOR THE THRONE.
DURING HIS LAST VISIT HERE, HE SEEMED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH.
I'VE HEARD THAT.
THE KING OF KENT HAS TAKEN TO HIS BED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.
THE KING'S SON IS TOO YOUNG, AND GORIEL ISN'T A SUITABLE LEADER. IT WILL CAUSE SERIOUS DETRIMENT TO THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY.
THE NEWS ABOUT THE KING IS TROUBLING.
KENT IS ONE OF THE MORE POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION.
SHE'S A PERFUMER. I BELIEVE SHE MAY BE RELATED TO THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN WHO KILLED THE KING OF NAVARA.
IT SEEMS THE KING BECAME ILL AFTER PRINCE GORIEL TOOK A LOVER.
THERE'S MORE NEWS.

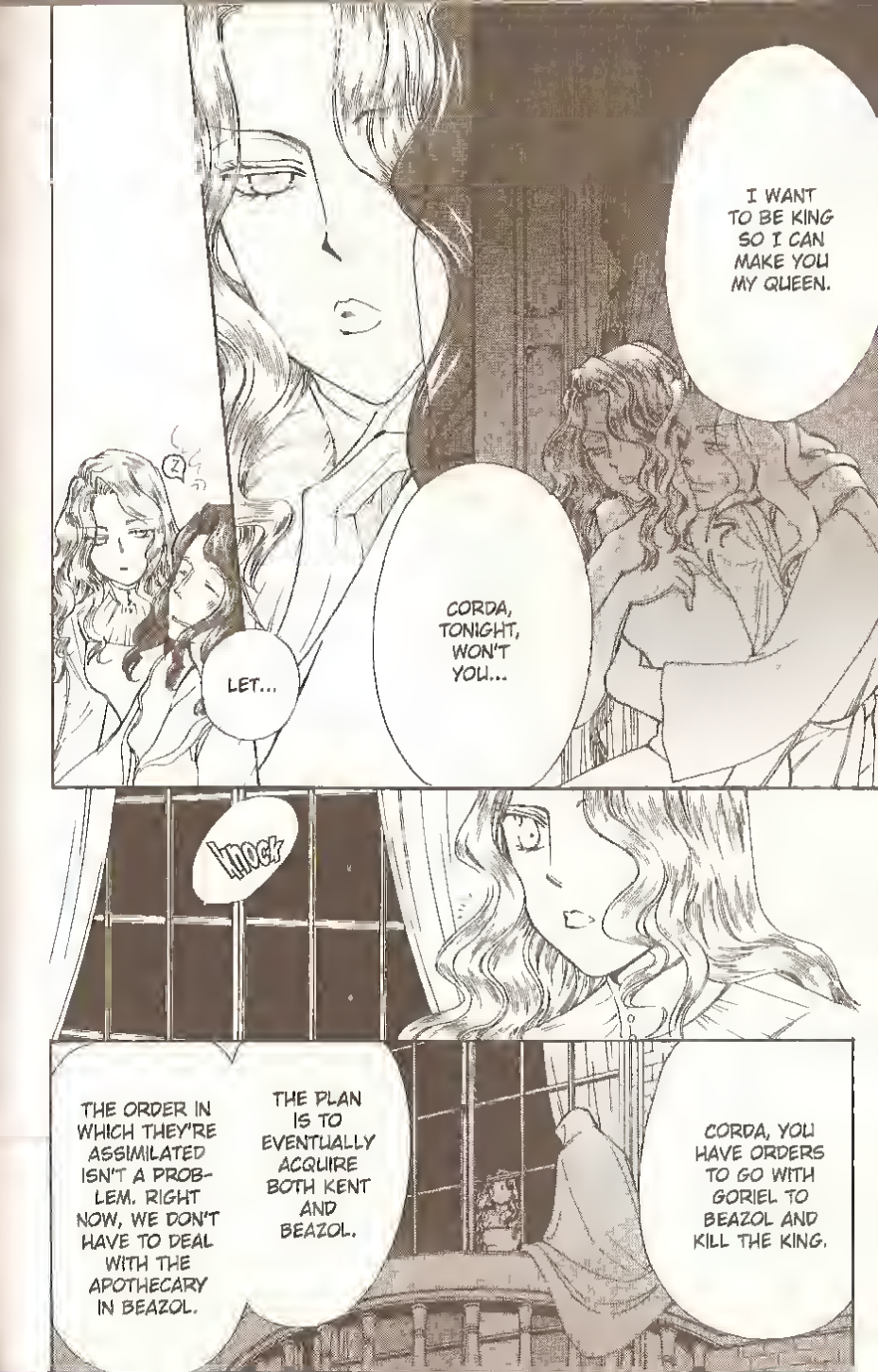

I'M INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINION.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
I HAVE TO ASK. DO YOU THINK HE WILL BE HAPPY ONCE HIS BODY RETURNS TO NORMAL?
I DON'T KNOW.
IT'S SOMETHING HE'S ALWAYS WANTED.
HE WANTS TO BE ABLE TO GET CLOSE TO OTHERS.
I AGREE.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S LIMITED TO BASILISKS.
PRINCE DANIEL, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT...


YOU LOOK UNSETTLED, LADY PRIMULA.
YOU CANNOT JUST GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS. YOU HAVE TO APPLY YOUR HEART AS WELL AS YOUR ROYAL PRIDE.
PRINCE DANIEL!
IS IT BECAUSE YOUR APOTHECARY'S GONE?
HE DIDN'T LEAVE ME. I DON'T THINK OF IT THAT WAY.
I UNDERSTAND HIS DESIRE, BUT TO LEAVE HIS LOVE AND TRAVEL ABROAD...
ARGENT MADE A BAD MOVE.
I SET HIM FREE.

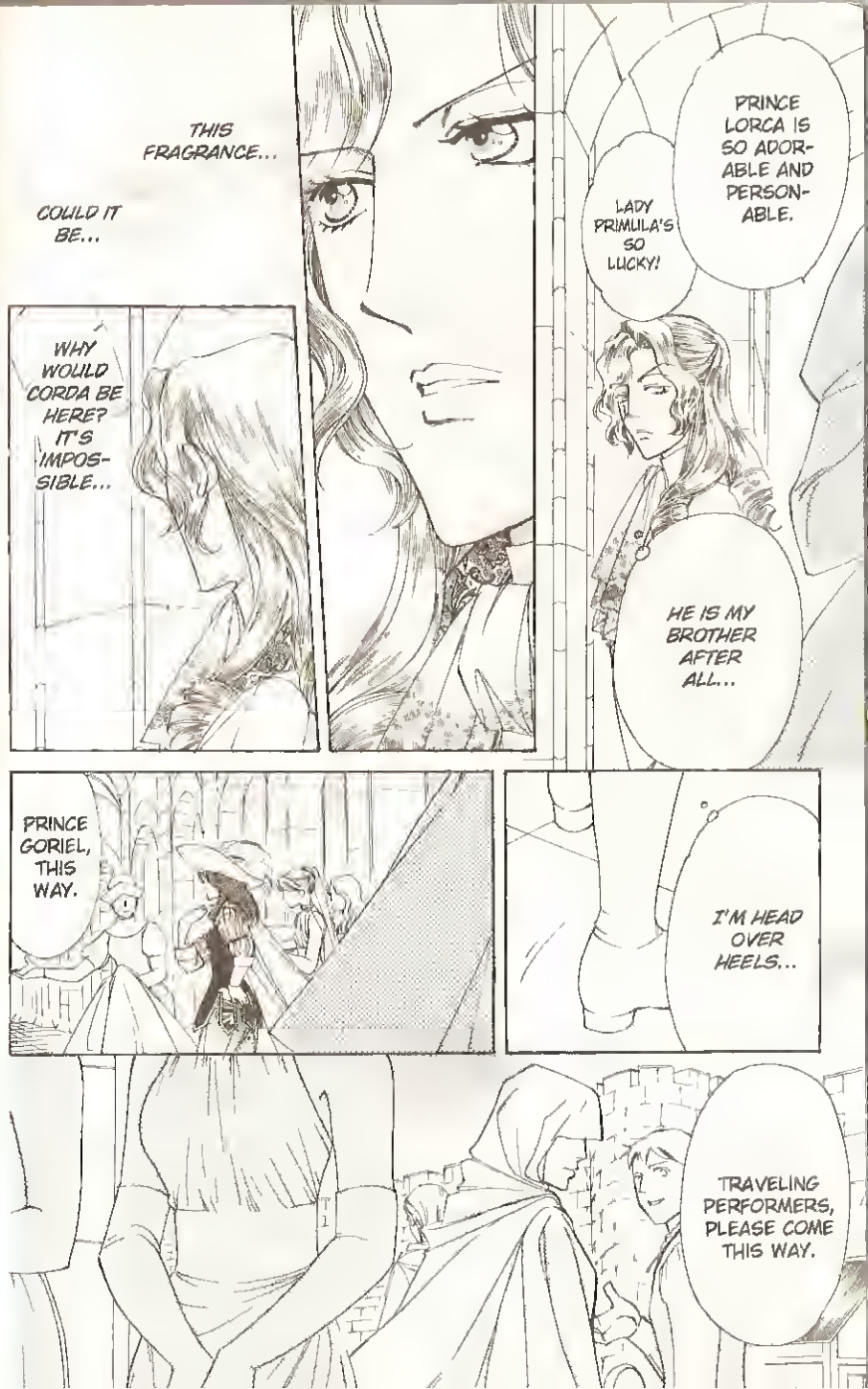
HE INVITED YOU BECAUSE HE FEELS YOU'LL BE THE NEXT KING OF KENT.
DON'T BE SO ANGRY.
MY BROTHER'S STILL ALIVE!
AFTER RUSHING ME OUT OF THE COUNTRY?
HE WANTS ME TO ATTEND THE HARVEST FESTIVAL ...
THESE THINGS TAKE TIME. RUSHING THE PROCESS ONLY BREEDS SUSPICION.
HOW LONG BEFORE HE'S DEAD AND COLD IN THE GROUND, CORDA?
I'M NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT THE THRONE.
IT'S WISE TO MAKE A SLOW CLIMB TO THE THRONE.


THAT GIRL IS PRETTY SHARP.
I TAKE IT YOU HAVE NOT FOUND WOMEN OF YOUR TYPE IN BEAZOL?
...YOU'RE LOOKING UNSETTLED YOURSELF.
WHAT IS SHE DOING NOW?
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO STOP THINKING ABOUT HER.
CRUSH
CORDA, THE BASILISK WHO ASSASSINATED MY FATHER...
THAT RAT BASTARD!

I UNDERSTAND.
THE KING OF BEAZOL IS SHARP...
HE MAY BE AWARE OF THE SITUATION. THIS COULD BE A TRAP.
WE'VE BROUGHT ANOTHER ASSASSIN FROM BACK HOME.
YOU SHOULD WORK WITH HIM.
YES.
BUSTLE
BUSTLE
The morning of the Harvest Festival
CARLI, DON'T BE WOUND UP LIKE THAT.
WAIT, THAT'S WHY YOUR NAME SOUNDS LIKE CURLY! GET IT?
GIGGLE
IT'S NOT DONE RIGHT!
DAMMIT, WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE FLORAL DECORATIONS?!

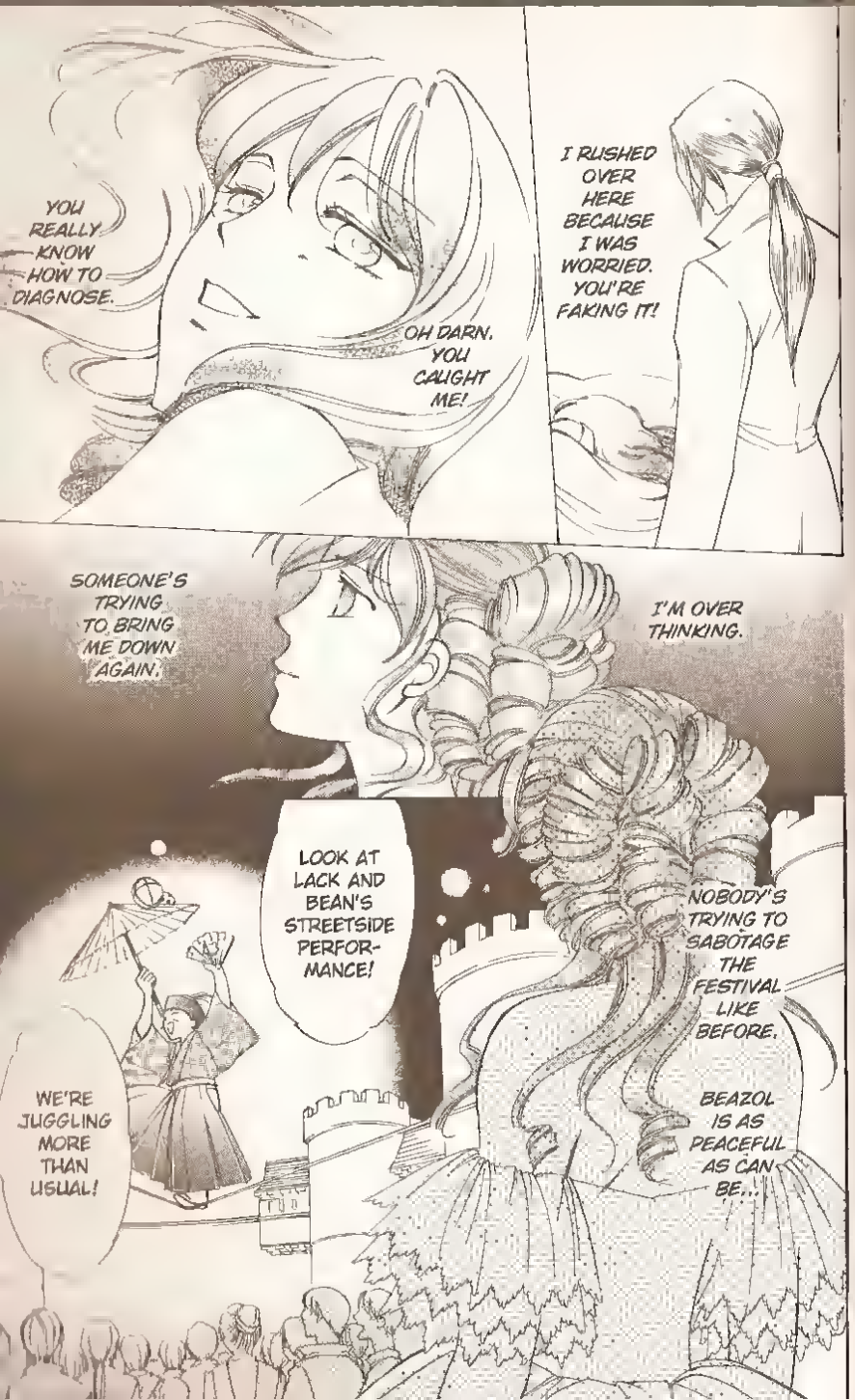

I WANT TO BE KING SO I CAN MAKE YOU MY QUEEN.
CORDA, TONIGHT, WON'T YOU...
LET...
Z
knock
CORDA, YOU HAVE ORDERS TO GO WITH GORIEL TO BEAZOL AND KILL THE KING.
THE PLAN IS TO EVENTUALLY ACQUIRE BOTH KENT AND BEAZOL.
THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY'RE ASSIMILATED ISN'T A PROBLEM. RIGHT NOW, WE DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE APOTHECARY IN BEAZOL.

THANK YOU FOR TRAVELING HERE.
NO NEED FOR FORMAL GREETINGS. PLEASE ENJOY THE FESTIVAL TONIGHT.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVITATION TO THE HARVEST FESTIVAL.
IN PLACE OF MY BROTHER, I AM HERE TO CELEBRATE WITH YOUR COUNTRY.
THEY COULD BE IN DISGUISE.
IT'S HARD TO IDENTIFY THEM WITH THEIR SIGNATURE FRAGRANCE, AS WOMEN WEAR PERFUMES.
I DON'T SEE ANY ATTENDANTS OR PERFORMERS WHO COULD BE BASILISKS.
CORDA, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
WHY DID YOU DYE YOUR HAIR AND STAIN YOUR SKIN? YOU'VE COMPROMISED YOUR BEAUTY.
IF WE CAN JUST SPOT THE TATTOO ON THEIR BODY...

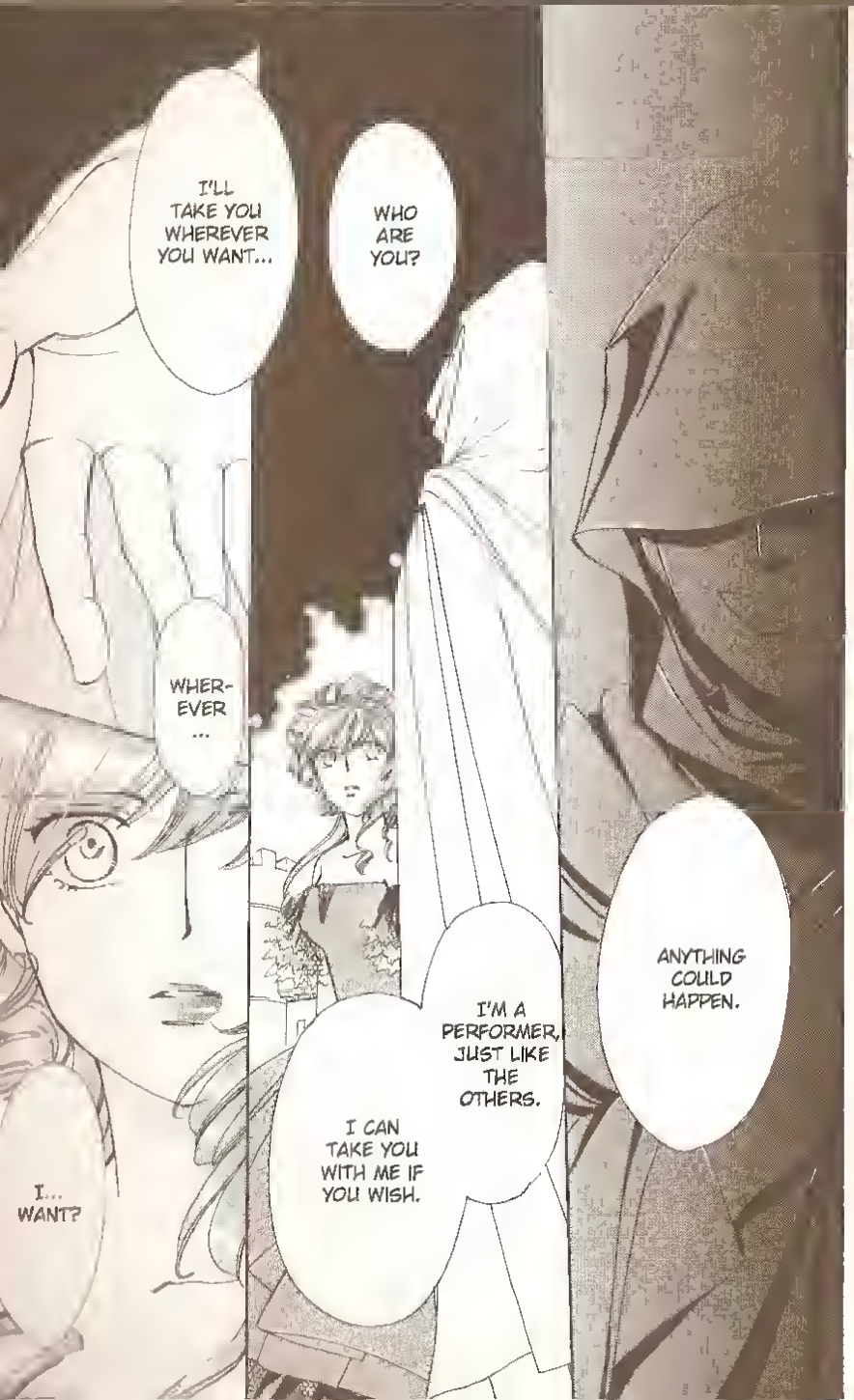

THIS FRAGRANCE...
COULD IT BE...
WHY WOULD CORDA BE HERE? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
LADY PRIMULA'S SO LUCKY!
PRINCE LORCA IS SO ADORABLE AND PERSONABLE.
HE IS MY BROTHER AFTER ALL...
PRINCE GORIEL, THIS WAY.
I'M HEAD OVER HEELS...
TRAVELING PERFORMERS, PLEASE COME THIS WAY.

I MADE THIS JUST FOR YOU. IT'S LIPSTICK MADE WITH COCHINEAL.
HERE, LET ME APPLY IT FOR YOU.
YOU LOOK GREAT! MAKES ME WANT TO KISS YOU.

IT'S THE DRESS MADE FROM FABRIC DYED WITH PRINCE LORCA'S CARMINE.
EVERYONE, LADY PRIMULA IS READY.
WOW, YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL!
I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.
YES!
IT'S FOR FUN. WE'RE AT A FESTIVAL!

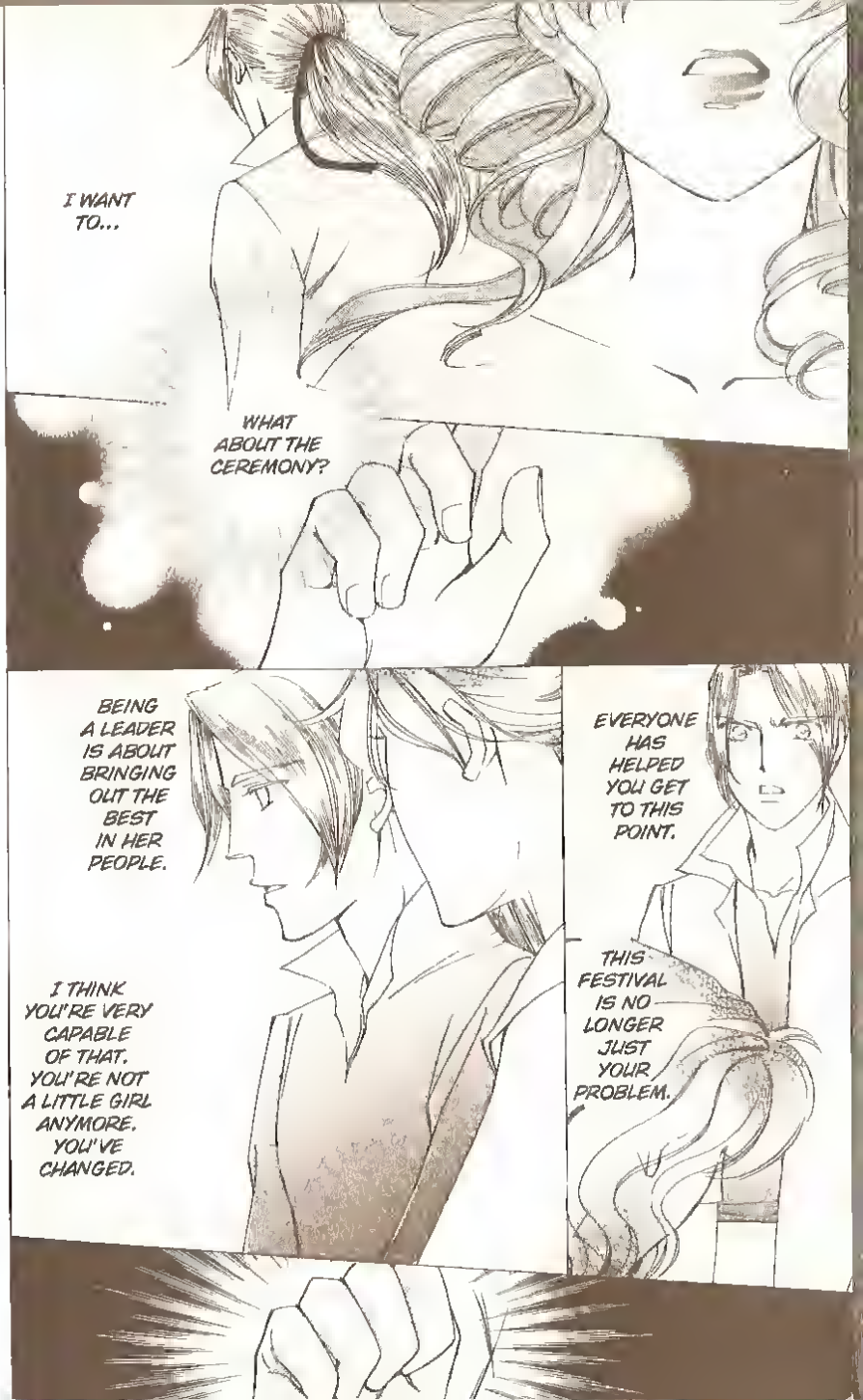

YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO DIAGNOSE.
OH DARN. YOU CAUGHT ME!
I RUSHED OVER HERE BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED. YOU'RE FAKING IT!
SOMEONE'S TRYING TO BRING ME DOWN AGAIN.
I'M OVER THINKING.
LOOK AT LACK AND BEAN'S STREETSIDE PERFOR-MANCE!
NOBODY'S TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE FESTIVAL LIKE BEFORE.
BEAZOL IS AS PEACEFUL AS CAN BE...
WE'RE JUGGLING MORE THAN USUAL!

dang!
LADY PRIMU-LA!
BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR CLOTHES AND MAKEUP INTACT!
EXCUSE ME.
I'M GOING TO GET SOME FRESH AIR BEFORE THE CEREMONY.
NO, I'M JUST NERVOUS BECAUSE OF THE CEREMONY.
IS IT BECAUSE OF LORCA?
WHY DO I FEEL SO UNEASY?


I'LL TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU WANT...
WHO ARE YOU?
WHER-EVER ...
I... WANT?
I CAN TAKE YOU WITH ME IF YOU WISH.
I'M A PERFORMER, JUST LIKE THE OTHERS.
ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN.

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY MY UNCLE WANTED TO BE A TRAVELING PERFORMER.
THESE ROYAL DUTIES ARE STRESSFUL. I WANT TO RUN AWAY FROM IT ALL RIGHT NOW.
I'M JUST NOT USED TO PUBLIC APPEAR-ANCES.
HOW ARE YOU, PRINCESS? YOU LOOK PALE.
PEOPLE WON'T NOTICE BECAUSE OF THE CROWD.
WHY DON'T YOU RUN AWAY?
CHEER
I'M SURPRISED A ROYAL WOULD FIND GLAMOUR IN OUR LIFE.
PEOPLE OFTEN LOSE THEIR SANITY AND SENSE OF ORDER FOR A SHORT TIME IN THE PROCESS.
FESTIVALS SIGNIFY A CHAOTIC CELEBRATION OF A NEW BEGINNING.
PRINCE DANIEL, THAT'S A TERRIBLE JOKE.

THAT'S TOO BAD.
THIS WAS AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU.
LADY PRIMULA! THE CEREMONY'S ABOUT TO BEGIN!
ON MY WAY, LORCA!
I'M THE HEIR TO THE THRONE. I CAN'T ABANDON MY PEOPLE.
I'LL PASS ON YOUR OFFER.

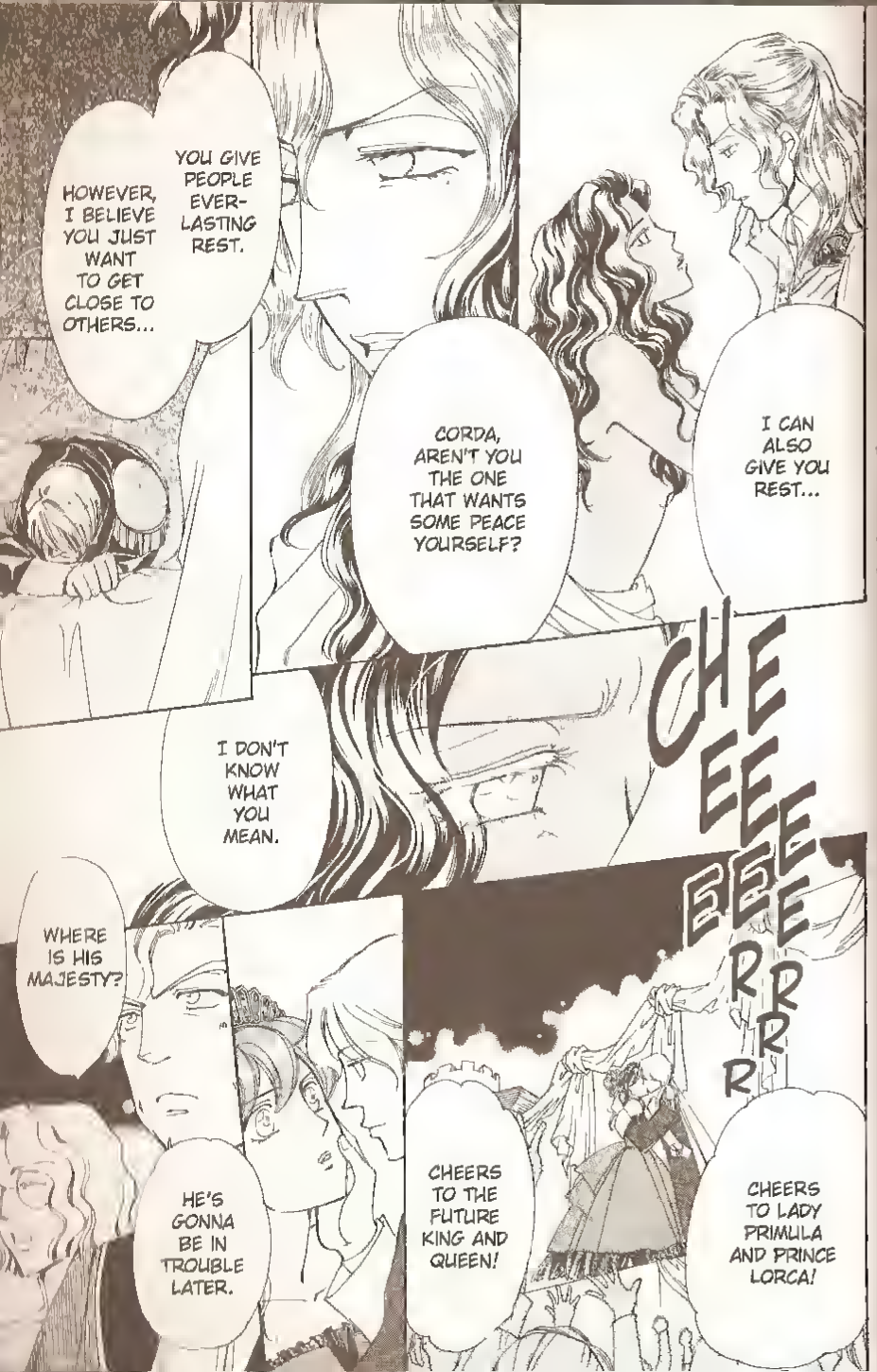

I WANT TO...
WHAT ABOUT THE CEREMONY?
BEING A LEADER IS ABOUT BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN HER PEOPLE.
I THINK YOU'RE VERY CAPABLE OF THAT. YOU'RE NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE. YOU'VE CHANGED.
EVERYONE HAS HELPED YOU GET TO THIS POINT.
THIS FESTIVAL IS NO LONGER JUST YOUR PROBLEM.

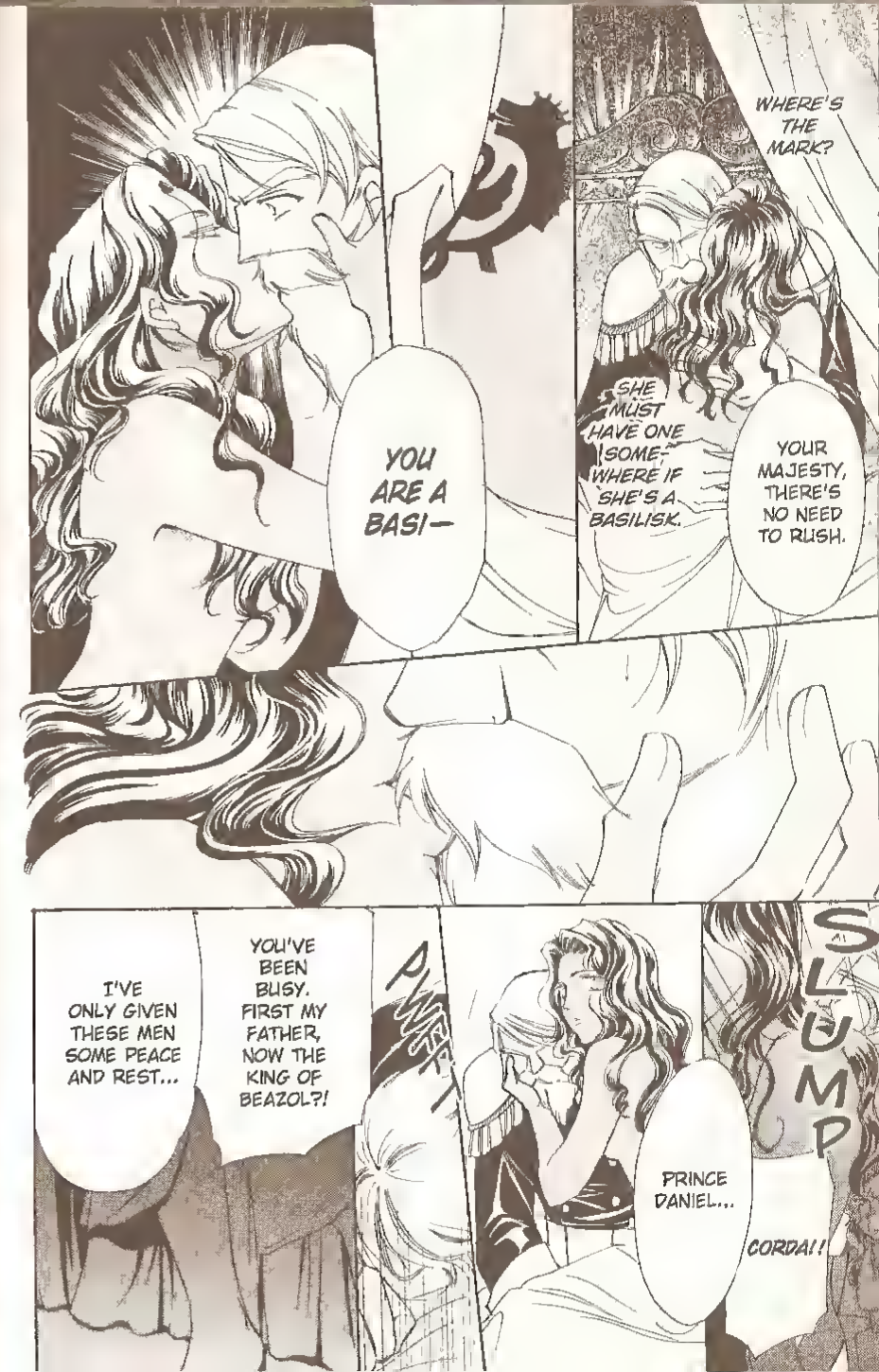
PLEASE BE GENTLE, YOUR MAJESTY.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, WE SHOULD GO SOMEWHERE MORE PRIVATE.
HARD TO SEE HER SKIN.
SOMEWHERE AWAY FROM PRINCE GORIEL'S EYES...

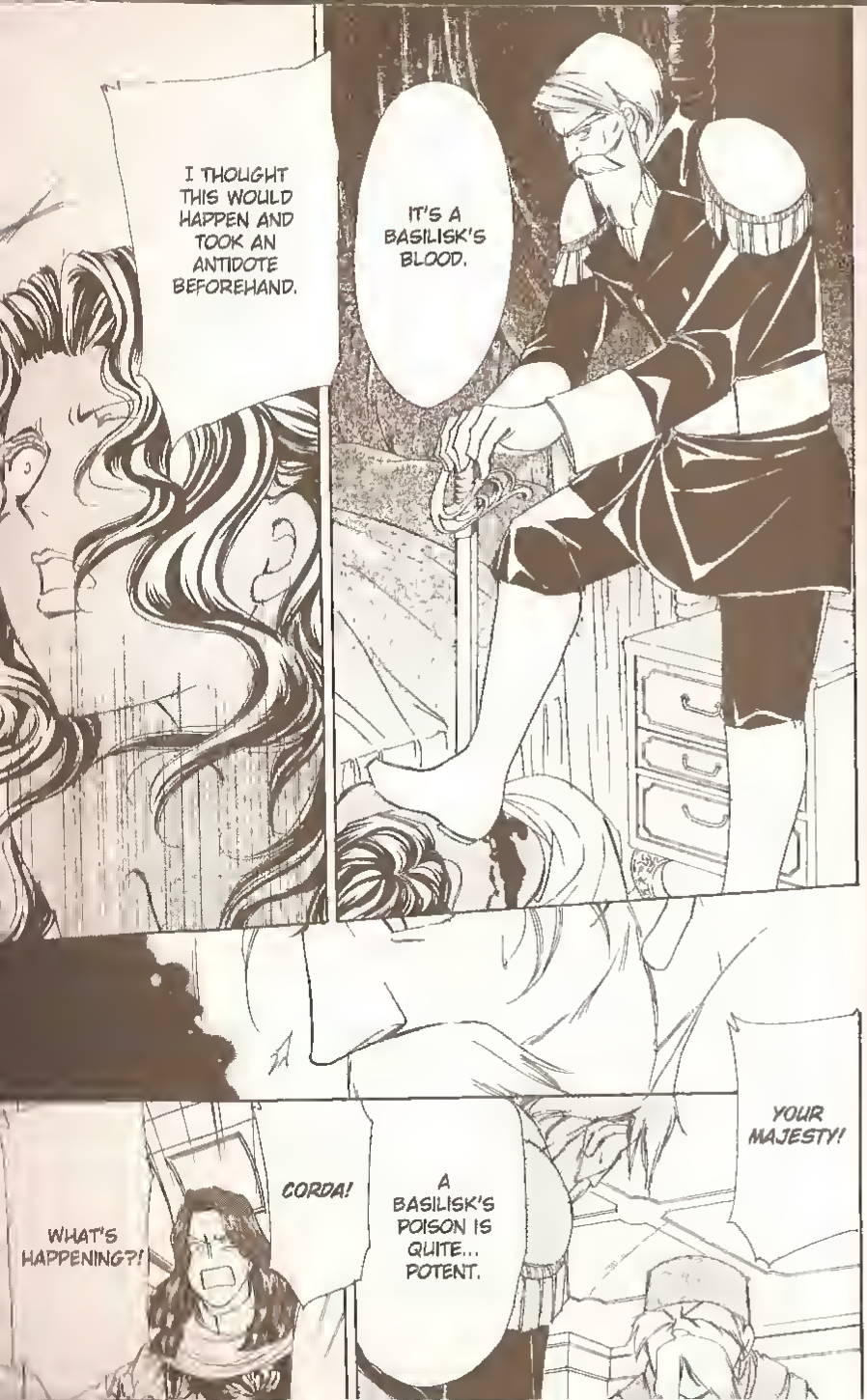
PRINCE GORIEL, PLEASE!
DANCE WITH ME.
LADY PRIMULA, PRINCE LORCA, PLEASE GET ON STAGE.
MAY I HAVE A DANCE WITH YOUR ATTENDING LADIES?
OF... COURSE.
YOUR MAJESTY ?
PRINCE GORIEL, I MUST ASK FOR YOUR PERMISSION.

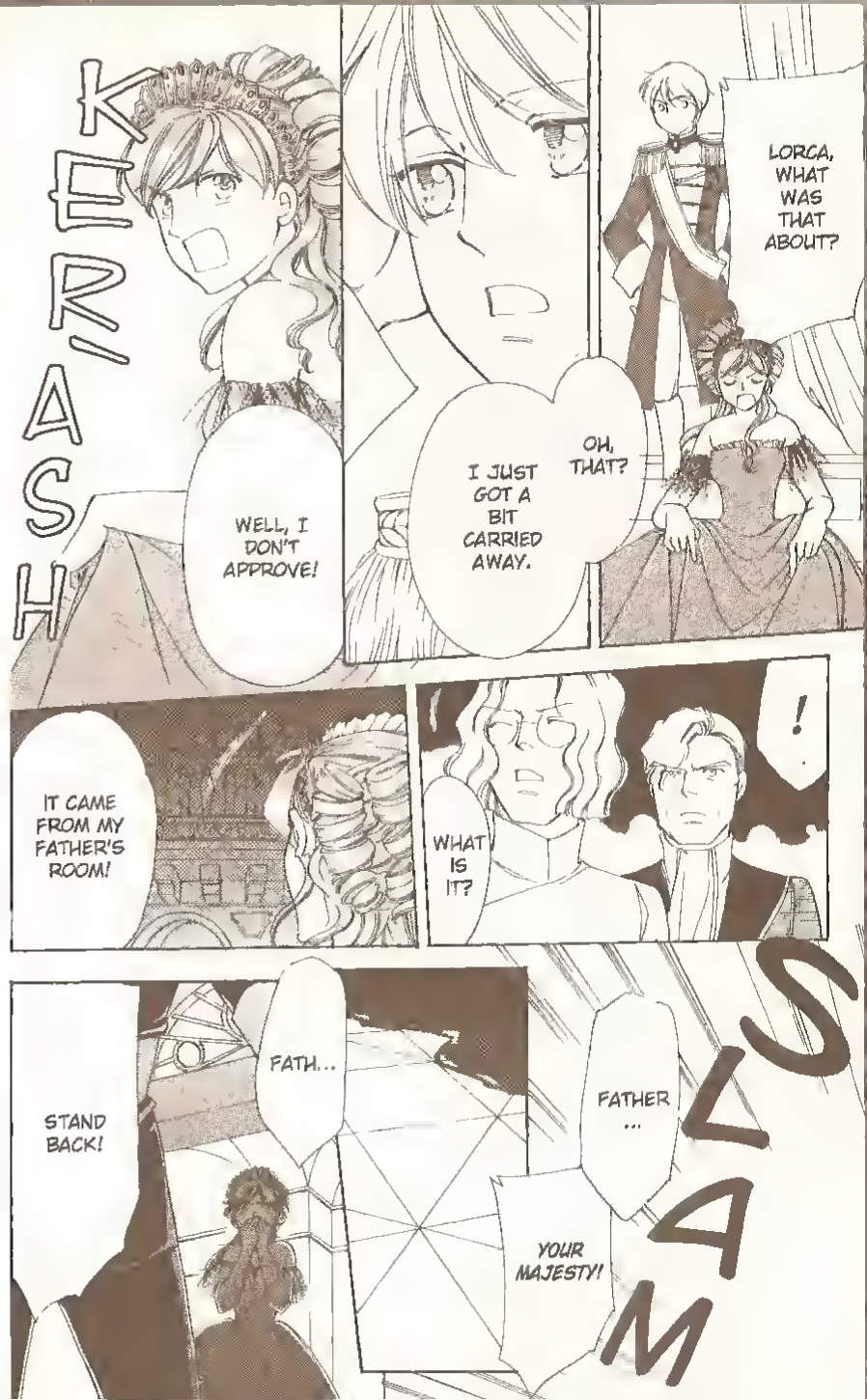
TO THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF BOTH KINGDOMS!
THIS IS THE FIRST HARVEST FESTIVAL SINCE THE PEACE TREATY BETWEEN NAVARA AND BEAZOL!
LOOK AT THE BUTTER-FLIES!
THIS YEAR'S FLOWER IS THE PRIMROSE AGAIN.
GASP
!
WHAT?
MY LADY, YOUR LIPSTICK ...
PHEW, IT'S FINALLY OVER WITHOUT A HITCH...
THIS IS AN ALMOST DREAMLIKE EFFECT HERE...

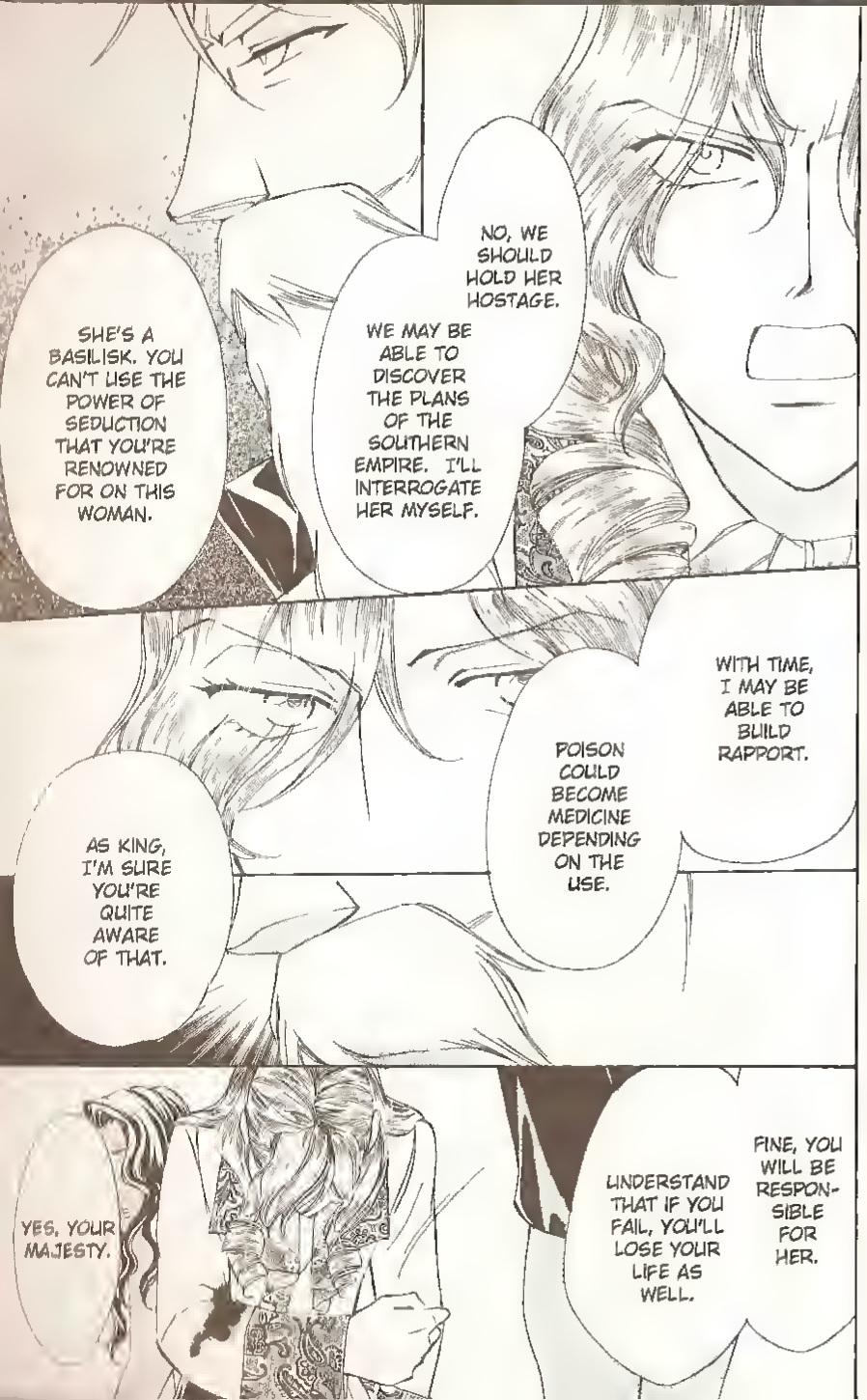
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THE CEREMONY'S STARTING!
COULD IT BE...
THE SWEET SCENT OF NIGHT BLOOMING FLOWERS
THIS SMELL...
CHATTER
CHATTER
PRINCE LORCA, THE SPEECH IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!
OH WELL, I GUESS...
SORRY, I HAVE TO CHASE AFTER A WOMAN!

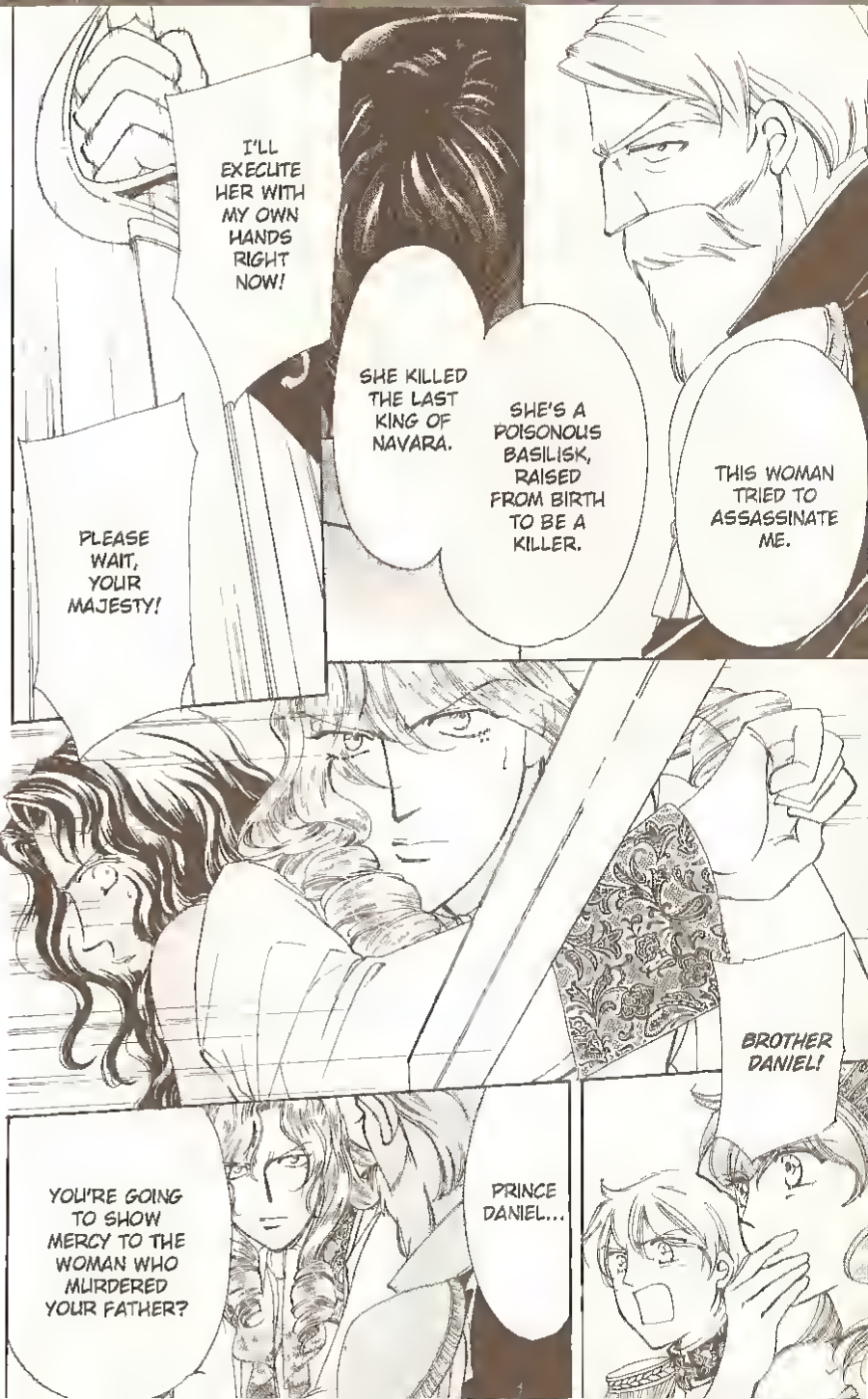

HOWEVER, I BELIEVE YOU JUST WANT TO GET CLOSE TO OTHERS...
YOU GIVE PEOPLE EVER-LASTING REST.
CORDA, AREN'T YOU THE ONE THAT WANTS SOME PEACE YOURSELF?
I CAN ALSO GIVE YOU REST...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
CHEEEEEEERRRR
WHERE IS HIS MAJESTY?
HE'S GONNA BE IN TROUBLE LATER.
CHEERS TO THE FUTURE KING AND QUEEN!
CHEERS TO LADY PRIMULA AND PRINCE LORCA!

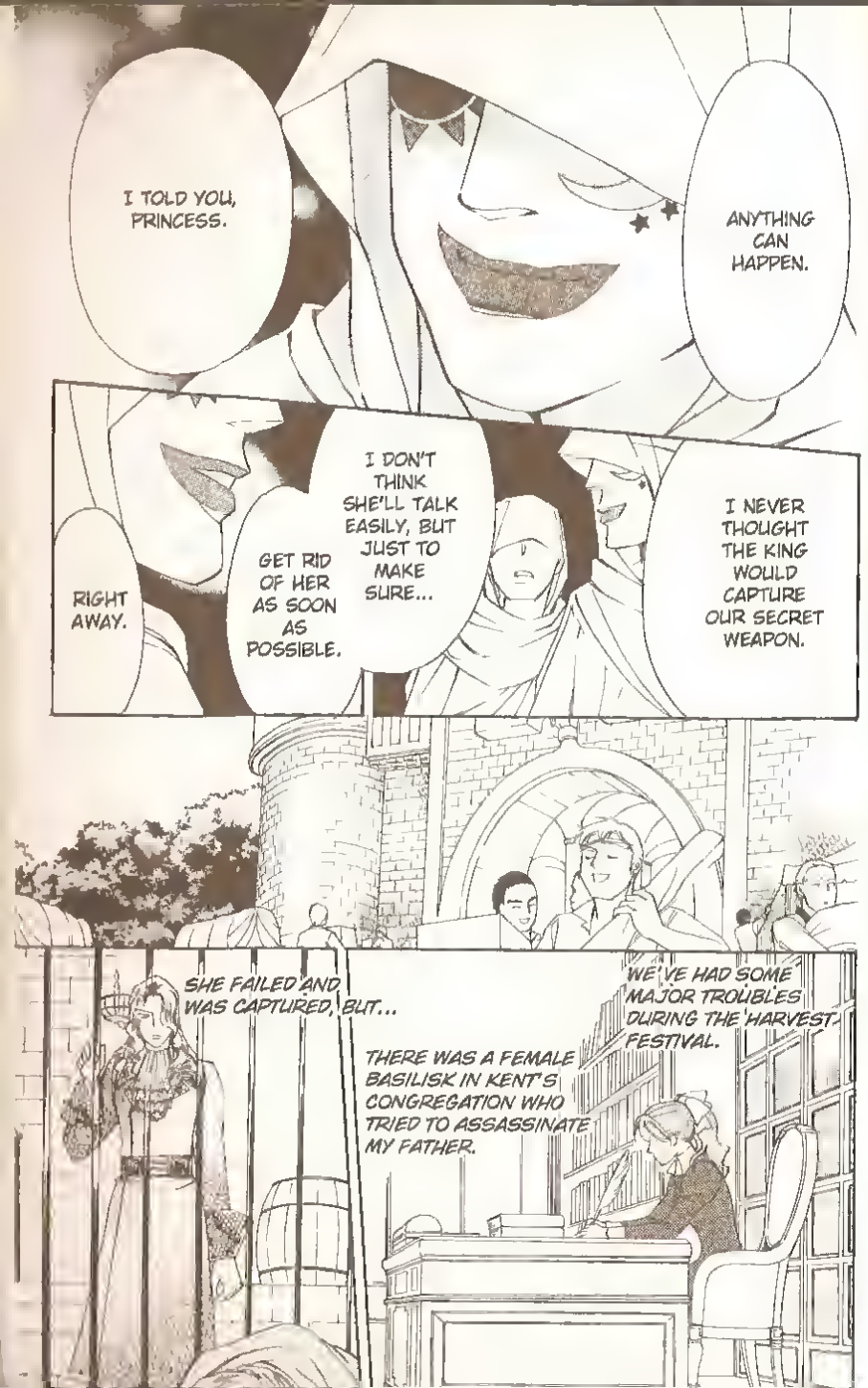

YOU ARE A BASI—
WHERE'S THE MARK?
SHE MUST HAVE ONE SOME-WHERE IF SHE'S A BASILISK.
YOUR MAJESTY, THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH.
I'VE ONLY GIVEN THESE MEN SOME PEACE AND REST...
YOU'VE BEEN BUSY. FIRST MY FATHER, NOW THE KING OF BEAZOL?!
PRINCE DANIEL...
SLUMP
CORDA!!

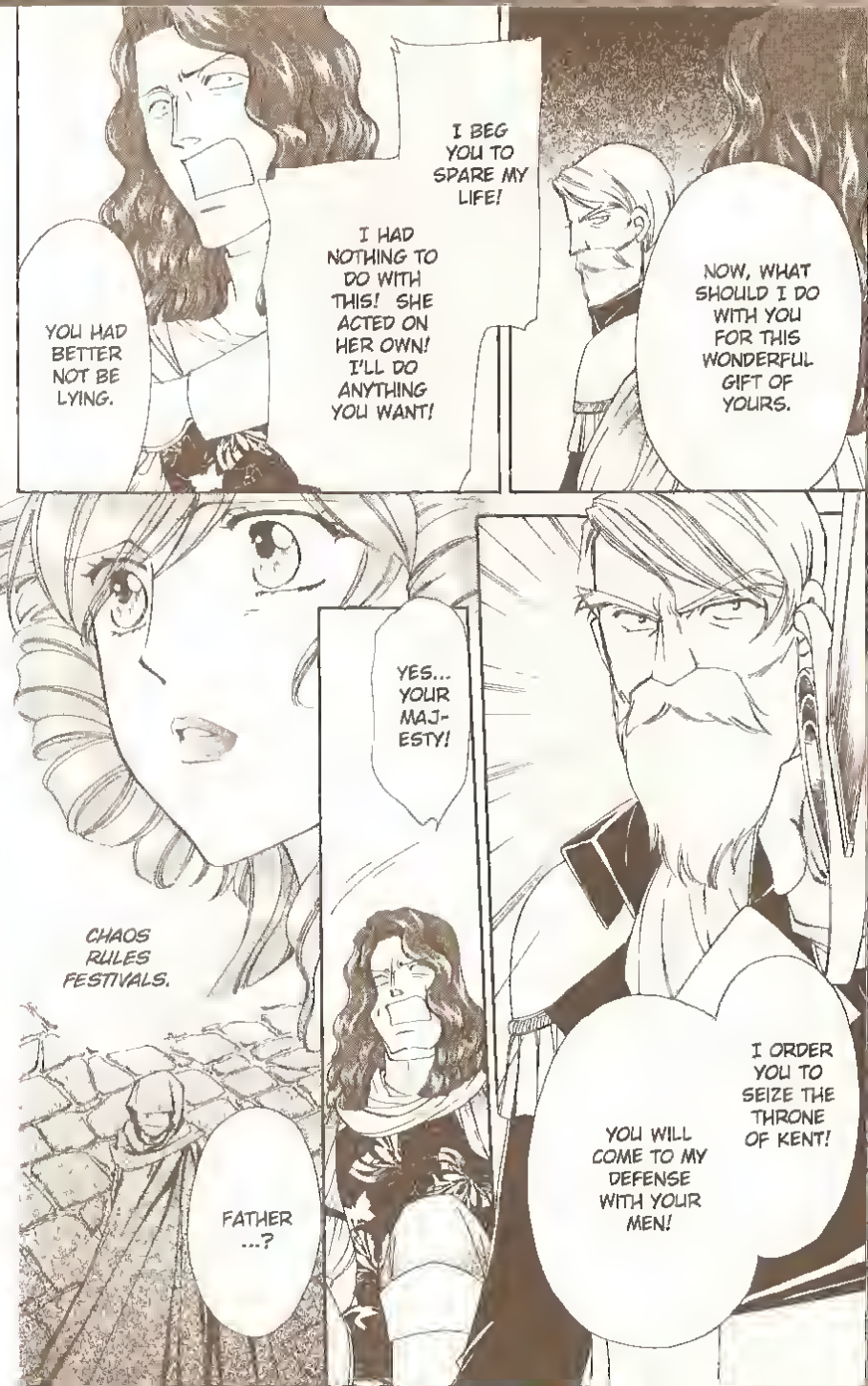

I THOUGHT THIS WOULD HAPPEN AND TOOK AN ANTIDOTE BEFOREHAND.
IT'S A BASILISK'S BLOOD.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
CORDA!
A BASILISK'S POISON IS QUITE... POTENT.
YOUR MAJESTY!

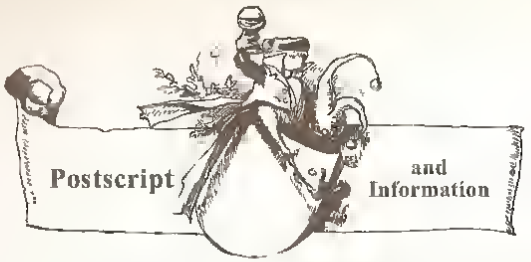

KERASH
WELL, I DON'T APPROVE!
I JUST GOT A BIT CARRIED AWAY.
OH, THAT?
LORCA, WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
IT CAME FROM MY FATHER'S ROOM!
WHAT IS IT?
!
SLAM
STAND BACK!
FATH...
FATHER ...
YOUR MAJESTY!


SHE'S A BASILISK. YOU CAN'T USE THE POWER OF SEDUCTION THAT YOU'RE RENOWNED FOR ON THIS WOMAN.
NO, WE SHOULD HOLD HER HOSTAGE.
WE MAY BE ABLE TO DISCOVER THE PLANS OF THE SOUTHERN EMPIRE. I'LL INTERROGATE HER MYSELF.
AS KING, I'M SURE YOU'RE QUITE AWARE OF THAT.
POISON COULD BECOME MEDICINE DEPENDING ON THE USE.
WITH TIME, I MAY BE ABLE TO BUILD RAPPORT.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
UNDERSTAND THAT IF YOU FAIL, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR LIFE AS WELL.
FINE, YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HER.


I'LL EXECUTE HER WITH MY OWN HANDS RIGHT NOW!
PLEASE WAIT, YOUR MAJESTY!
SHE KILLED THE LAST KING OF NAVARA.
SHE'S A POISONOUS BASILISK, RAISED FROM BIRTH TO BE A KILLER.
THIS WOMAN TRIED TO ASSASSINATE ME.
YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW MERCY TO THE WOMAN WHO MURDERED YOUR FATHER?
PRINCE DANIEL...
BROTHER DANIEL!


I TOLD YOU, PRINCESS.
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.
I DON'T THINK SHE'LL TALK EASILY, BUT JUST TO MAKE SURE...
GET RID OF HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
I NEVER THOUGHT THE KING WOULD CAPTURE OUR SECRET WEAPON.
RIGHT AWAY.
SHE FAILED AND WAS CAPTURED, BUT...
WE'VE HAD SOME MAJOR TROUBLES DURING THE HARVEST FESTIVAL.
THERE WAS A FEMALE BASILISK IN KENT'S CONGREGATION WHO TRIED TO ASSASSINATE MY FATHER.


I BEG YOU TO SPARE MY LIFE!
I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS! SHE ACTED ON HER OWN! I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT!
YOU HAD BETTER NOT BE LYING.
NOW, WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH YOU FOR THIS WONDERFUL GIFT OF YOURS.
YES... YOUR MAJ-ESTY!
CHAOS RULES FESTIVALS.
I ORDER YOU TO SEIZE THE THRONE OF KENT!
YOU WILL COME TO MY DEFENSE WITH YOUR MEN!
FATHER ...?



Postscript and Information

I hope you enjoyed volume 6. Soda's first love, the antagonism between doctors and apothecaries... I always wanted to create a story around this subject, but due to issues like civil unrest and trouble with neighbors, it's taken a while to appear. Meanwhile, Soda, Popola and Lulu's characters have evolved. People have written about Argent and Soda's masochistic combination. I've laughed about it, but it's about time they graduate from that label. I'm furiously working on that. Next volume, can they escape the masochism, and will Argent be reunited with Lady Primula? I hope you look forward to their adventures.

Yamashita

Toad Venom Extract Bufonis Venenum (Chapter 22, 23)

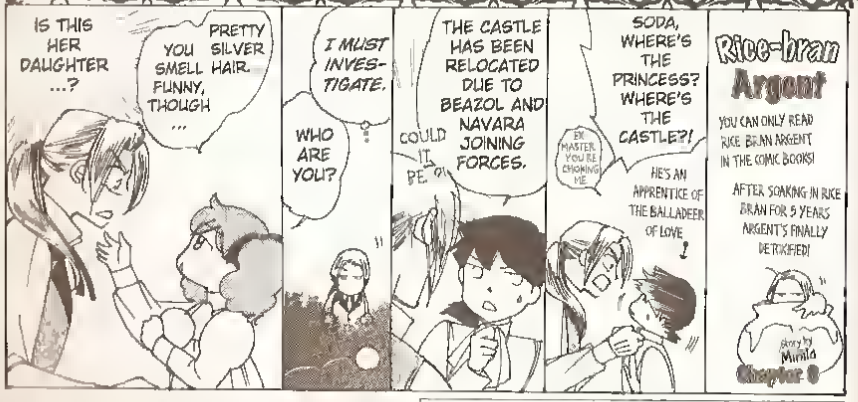
Toad venom is the dehydrated secretion of the auricular and skin glands of Bufo bufo gargarizans Cantor or Bufo melanotictus Schneider, Bufonidae. It contains steroids such as Resibufogenin and Bufotalin. It is a cardiotonic and eases inflammations. It can also be used as a local anesthetic. The cardiotonic qualities are similar to digitalis, but unlike the digitalis, it does not build up in the body. During the Edo era, street vendors often sold boiled and dried toad and centipede extracts to be used for skin scrapes and irritations. The main ingredient was fat from horses.

Leech (Chapter 23)

Leeches have been used medicinally since the time of the Ancient Egyptians, all the way to Europe in the 20th century. Their bloodsucking qualities were used medicinally for conditions such as stroke, glaucoma, and bruising. They were also used to assist in encouraging circulation post amputation and the prevention of gangrene. Bloodletting fell out of favor and leeches were phased out in modern medicine. However, leeches are making a comeback in today's medicine due to many beneficial chemicals that leeching produces, such as anticoagulants and anti arthritic compounds.

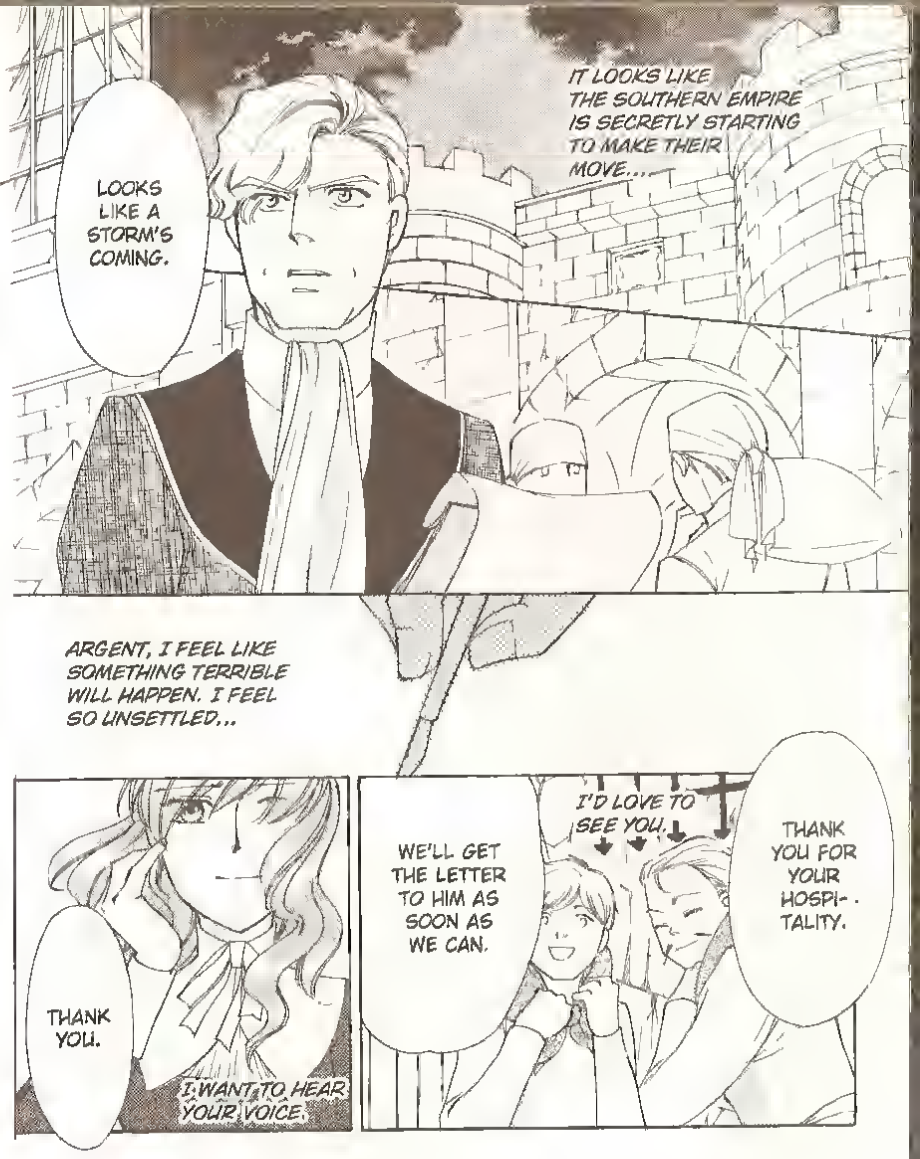
Ethyl Ether (Chapter 23)

First synthesized in 1540 by Valerius Cordus, it was introduced as a general anesthetic in 1840 by Morton. The administration requires very little equipment. It can be administered through inhalation through a mask. As a result, it was used as an anesthetic for children as well. It is no longer used as an anesthetic due to its flammability and negative side effects.


IS THIS HER DAUGHTER ...?
PRETTY SILVER HAIR.
YOU SMELL FUNNY, THOUGH ...
I MUST INVESTIGATE.
WHO ARE YOU?
THE CASTLE HAS BEEN RELOCATED DUE TO BEAZOL AND NAVARA JOINING FORCES.
COULD IT BE...
SODA, WHERE'S THE PRINCESS? WHERE'S THE CASTLE?!
EH MASTER, YOU'RE CHOKING ME
HE'S AN APPRENTICE OF THE BALLADEER OF LOVE
Rice-bran Argent
YOU CAN ONLY READ RICE BRAN ARGENT IN THE COMIC BOOKS!
AFTER SOAKING IN RICE BRAN FOR 5 YEARS ARGENT'S FINALLY BE TICKLED!
story by Mimita
Chapter 0

I've got a bad feeling... tune in next time!

Apothecarius Argentum c/o CMX
888 Prospect Street, Suite 240,
La Jolla CA 92037


LOOKS LIKE A STORM'S COMING.
IT LOOKS LIKE THE SOUTHERN EMPIRE IS SECRETLY STARTING TO MAKE THEIR MOVE...
ARGENT, I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING TERRIBLE WILL HAPPEN. I FEEL SO UNSETTLED...
THANK YOU.
I WANT TO HEAR YOUR VOICE.
WE'LL GET THE LETTER TO HIM AS SOON AS WE CAN.
I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPI- . TALITY.
I NEED YOU MORE THAN EVER RIGHT NOW...